RECENT THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN SWEDEN A LUTHER RENAISSANCE

BY

HJALMAR LINDROTH

PROFESSOR UPPSALA UNIVERSITY SWEDEN

TRANSLATED BY

GUSTAV CARLBERG

PRESIDENT

LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

TAOFONGSHAN, HONGKONG.

-2. APR. 1976

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

As has already been indicated in the author's preface, the title of this study is, "The Luther Renaissance in Recent Swedish Theology," which is a literal rendering of the title in Swedish, "Lutherrenässansen i nyare svensk teologi". For the purposes of the English edition the title is rendered: Recent Theological Research in Sweden: A Luther Renaissance.

It is the firm conviction of the translator that this volume will prove an indispensable aid and guide to those who wish to acquaint themselves with the rich theological contributions that have flowed from Swedish pens during the first half of the present century.

Publishers are awake to the demand for English editions of recent Swedish theological works, and such are being planned and prepared in ever increasing numbers. We are confident that the present volume will help to stir the interest of English readers everywhere in the valuable and comprehensive output of theological literature from the land of the north.

GUSTAV CARLBERG

Taofongshan, Hongkong

July, 1950

PREFACE

The following survey of an important period in the history of Swedish theology has been published earlier in the form of articles in Ny kyrklig tidskrift, under the title, "Four Decades of Swedish Luther Research." In 1941 this survey was published in book form with the title, "The Luther Renaissance in Recent Swedish Theology." An account of Swedish Luther researches, issued since that date, has been prepared, and is now being published for the first time in this English edition of the work in question.

This study of the recent decades of Swedish Luther-literature has set for itself no other aim than to give, as far as possible, an objective insight into certainly the most significant sphere of recent Swedish researches in systematic theology, the intensive exploration of Luther's faith concepts and Christian interpretations.

This study has not attempted to pass judgment upon, nor to evaluate, the various Luther researches, but to present them as they stand, and, if possible, to comprehend them in the wider context of methodology and historical theology.

Since the subject of this study comprises a whole body of literature, it can not lay claim to completeness in any sense of the word, but merely wishes to present a fundamental orientation, and to indicate the most vital and

widely considered problems in connection with modern Swedish Luther research.

Luther's thoughts, faith concepts, and Christian interpretations, are certainly more living and real to present-day systematic theological thinking than ever before. The penetrating and comprehensive Luther researches of recent decades have contributed to this end.

That is the reason why the present study has been named, "The Luther Renaissance in Recent Swedish Theology."

HJALMAR LINDROTH

Uppsala, Sweden

November, 1949

I

One might venture the assertion that the history of systematic theology in our country, from the beginning of this century to the present time, essentially coincides with the history of Swedish Luther research for the same period. The deeper penetration into the theology of Luther has become a richly flowing fountain of inspiration for the work of research in the field of systematic theology during the first five decades of the twentieth century. No theologian, who has earnestly grappled with the cardinal problems connected with Christian faith and view of life, has been able to avoid assuming an attitude towards, or to be influenced by, the theological views of Luther, as they have appeared in ever clearer light through these researches.

Einar Billing's academic treatise, "Luther's Teaching Regarding the State in Connection with his Fundamental Reformatory Concepts and Earlier Church Doctrines I", published in 1900, marks the beginning of the Luther Renaissance which forms the most characteristic feature of recent Swedish researches in the field of systematic theology. Certainly Luther's views had received earlier lively attention in our country. Billing's investigation of Luther's teaching regarding the state is, as he himself states, [1] in a certain sense to be regarded as a continuation of R. Sundelin's, "Presentation and Examination of Luther's Social Ethic I.

1. p. v.

The Family" (1880). According to the plan laid down by Sundelin, the remainder of this work was intended to deal with the State and the Church.

In his researches in Luther, Billing does not merely follow a specific program of investigation, but he also takes occasion to point, from time to time, to various Swedish studies in Luther. But regarding these earlier works on Luther as a whole one can say that they offer nothing essentially new beyond that of their German forerunners. The new in Billing, which prefigures the following researches, is above all the method he launches. He represents the aim of his work to be mainly a purely historical one, specifically a historical philological one.[1] He wishes to understand the thoughts of Luther in the historical connection where they mainly belong. And he essays to examine the meaning of Luther's chief terms in the light of his linguistic usage.

Along with this he combines the systematic method. The systematic viewpoint must stand alongside the historical as of equal merit. The object of research itself requires this. Because, as Billing maintains, Luther's thoughts "are still today perfectly timely, more so, perhaps, than those of any other historical personality. They play in most directly into many of the most burning questions of the day".[2]

Billing, to be sure, never completed his great plan of giving both a detailed and

1. p. v. 2. p. vi.

comprehensive presentation of Luther's view of the State. The first part of the work, which essentially comprises a broadly conceived introduction to the presentation of Luther's teachings about the State, was never followed by a second part. But in its incomplete state, this work of Billing has been of fundamental import for the researches to follow, because he has here in principle indicated, and practically applied, that combination of historical and systematic method, which is the most characteristic aspect of the later Swedish Luther researches, as well as of recent Swedish systematic theology in general.

Already before Billing had published the work on Luther, just mentioned, Nathan Söderblom had issued a few minor studies in Luther. One cannot understand the Luther renaissance in Swedish theology, beginning with the present century, without paying attention to this second great noteworthy personage of recent Swedish theology. In the work just mentioned, Billing had noticeably departed from the Ritschl-Harnack view of Luther and the Reformation. The theological contribution of Söderblom, as well, implies essentially a final reckoning with the fundamental ideas of the Ritschlian theology. The importance of Söderblom for Swedish Luther renaissance, however, turns out to be largely of a different nature from that of Billing.

In the first place, the theological contribution of Söderblom, did not accrue to the

benefit of professional Luther research, but rather to the benefit of theology in general. He restored to theology that attitude of confidence among the other sciences which it had long lacked. He maintained that not only Christianity, but religion as a whole, was the subject of theology. In his book, "The Study of Religion" (1908), presenting his theological program, he submits, that "Science cannot recognize any essential difference between the science of religion and theology".[1] Here he lets the study of religious history and psychology belong not merely to the introduction and periphery of theology, but to its very center.

In his, possibly most genial writing, "Revelatory Religion", he has posed a problem, from the ordinary viewpoint of the science of religion, specifically, the history and psychology of religion, which in many respects has come to influence later theology. He differentiates between culture religion, that is natural religion, and prophetical religion. A characteristic of the former is, that religious development goes hand in hand with cultural development. In the realm of prophetic religion, however, which presupposes revelation, the religious status is not determined by, but is rather independent of cultural development. Prophetical religion can emerge as well on the lowest as on the highest levels of culture.

Söderblom finds the line of prophetic religion represented within Parsiism and the Religions of the Bible. Since mysticism,

1. p. 3, cf. p. 99f.

according to the most general usage of the word, as employed by Söderblom, signifies the inner side of all religion, he cannot, with A. Ritschl, dismiss mysticism from the Christian Religion. But Söderblom distinguishes the mysticism of infinity, which prevails within culture and nature religions, where the personality is eventually swallowed up in the mystical union with divinity, and personal mysticism, which allows personality to remain, and which also finds room within the Christian Religion. Söderblom sees in Luther an outstanding representative of this type of piety, stamped with strong personal life. "Luther has delineated 'a Christian's fellowship with God', according to the character of revelatory religion, in contrast with the sublime mysticism of infinity, with incomparable richness and clarity. Faith, trust, is expressive of personal relationship".[1] This personal feature came to be looked upon among researchers as the distinguishing mark of evangelical Christianity, a conception which in turn has influenced the interpretation of Luther's views.

Also in another respect Söderblom breaks with the fundamental views of Ritschl. Ritschl conceived of the religions as standing in a developmental series, the highest point of which is represented by Christianity as ethical monotheism. The entire emphasis was placed on the ethical feature. But the ethics had nothing to do with an ascetic and pessimistic view of life, founded on a dualism between nature and

1. 2 ed. p. 82.

spirit. Instead of this, Ritschl's interpretation of Christianity was characterized by a monistic, optimistic, world-affirming fundamental concept.

According to Söderblom, the dualistic, rather than the monistic, view belongs to the essence of prophetic religion. But this dualism, Söderblom maintains, is another than that between spirit and nature, namely a "practical, ethical, religious", one.[1] Söderblom asks, "Is not the Gospel belief in demons, shared by the contemporaries of Jesus, a dark blot from dark ages, in the picture of the glad tidings of salvation?" And he adds, "Some maintain, that the dualism in the Gospel should and could be removed as something added from the outside and by nature foreign and contradictory. This is perhaps the common view.

"I cannot see it otherwise than that the experience of sin, suffering, and distress, which are the strength of a religion, with necessity lead from the monism of the prophets to the dualism of the Gospel, and that this development is one of the most important ones in the religion of revelation.....Jesus has intensified the dualism, not toned it down. All attempts within Christendom to escape or surmount this dualism have weakened the power which inheres in the Gospel's unafraid sense of reality".[2] The insistence upon this dualistic feature of the Gospel has been of extraordinary importance for the subsequent Luther researches, and has led directly, as we

1. 2 ed. p. 61. 2. p. 64f.

shall see, to an investigation of dualism in Luther.

Söderblom writes, "Luther has also indicated in opposition to the 'enthusiasts', a psychological characteristic of personal mysticism, as to its experience of God, namely terrores conscientiae, agony of conscience, fear and trembling, which pointedly indicates the difference between his religion and the mysticism of infinity, namely its personal, ethical qualification, and feeling of God's activity".[1] Also with respect to the meaning of these terrores conscientiae, Söderblom runs counter to Ritschl. It is not possible "with Ritschl and Harnack to explain Luther's terrors of conscience, his anguish of spirit, and fear of death and hell, as conditioned by his individual situation and the ignorance concerning salvation, in which his church had kept him".[2] Because such experiences are thoroughly authenticated in Scripture, and imply namely "the entire human reaction on meeting with God's infinite holiness and love".[3]

The suffering on the part of man, which lies in these "terrores", has its positive counterpart in the consciousness of God's activity. God's dealings, God's objective acts alone are the basis of salvation. These ideas have been of incomparable importance for the subsequent deeper penetration into Luther's Christian interpretations, where the idea of salvation as solely an act of God, and the total aspect of man as sinner, are distinctive features.

1. p. 82. 2. p. 85. 3. ibid.

Söderblom's treatise, "Revelatory Religion", has been of fundamental importance for the subsequent Luther researches, in still another respect. In a few extremely pregnant phrases he has marked the difference between the mysticism of infinity and the religion of revelation: "There an outstretched hand, a longing, dreamy look. Here a man who shrinks back trembling, not daring to lift his eyes. There an ascent to heaven. Here a struggle in the darkness of death. He who is visited by grace feels God's powerful grip over himself and trembles under it. But he finds no means of escape, and he seeks none, no, he kisses and blesses the hand. Because it lifts him up into another world, into the blessed kingdom of life, and holds him so fast, so secure, that he can defy sin and death and devil.....There endeavor to reach the one, great, unspeakable. Here a meeting in the stillness, in the desert, in the line of duty, with a compelling, living, active will, with an overflowing, overwhelming personal life-fulness of holiness and love.....There the great quietness, the faraway inscrutability of the divine. Here a living, an unutterably active, overwhelming and saving God". [1]

The ecstacy, into which the mysticism of infinity at last issues, is essentially related to the eros type of piety. Its antipode is found in the agape attitude. Söderblom does not make use of the terms eros and agape, [2] but

1. p. 87.
2. The Greek terms eros and agape can be conveniently rendered, human love or desire, and Divine love, respectively. Tr.

in fact the distinction: eros-agape is contained in the antithesis of Söderblom between the mysticism of infinity and the religion of revelation. How this distinction, fundamental for all religious life, has come to be used also in the Luther researches, and how it has promoted a deeper understanding of the central and sustaining elements in Luther's Christian interpretations, shall be indicated in the following discussion.

As already indicated, Söderblom has indeed given general impulses of a fundamental nature towards a deeper understanding of Luther, and this contribution is to be characterized as in the nature of systematic theology. However, in his one larger Luther monograph, "Humor and Melancholy and other Luther Studies" (1919), he has posed a task not in systematic theology, but rather in psychology, specifically in psychology of religion. In this work, which is one of the most distinctive in all the Luther literature, Söderblom has shed a psychological light on the fundamental features of Luther's character, and he has definitely refrained from the systematic task.

Here is depicted in a living way how humor preserved for Luther freshness of soul and freedom from artificiality and affectedness of spirit. "Humor was a safety-valve, doubly necessary in a life, exposed to high pressure, which, without the diversion of humor, would have blasted even a soul of heroic mould". [1]

Luther was, as Söderblom points out,

1. p. 6.

conscious of "that he was a revealer of God's grace and of the Christian life in line with the very greatest." At the same time he knew how to amuse his friends, and most of all himself, with the small and great weaknesses of Doctor Martinus. The safety-valve of humor saved him from a ludicrous or titanic pomposity.[1] But if humor is understood as a person's total reaction towards life, then Luther was not a humorist, thus Söderblom avers. "Luther was by no means a humorist at heart. His soul was too passionate, his position too serious for this".[2]

Söderblom begins the study of Luther's melancholy with a few very expressive lines from a self-confession by Luther of 1518: "I know a man who maintains he has often suffered these torments. Certainly they lasted only brief periods, but they were so strong, so hellish, that no tongue can tell, nor pen describe them, nor can one who has not experienced them believe it. If they were consummated, or if they would last half an hour, yea, the tenth part of an hour, one would perish and all ones bones would be changed to ashes."

What has been the significance of this heaviness of spirit in making Luther the hearty and mighty comforter he really is? What is the connection between Luther's melancholy and the ethical-religious feeling of guilt which forms the dark background to the assurance of forgiveness of sins, and his joyfully courageous confidence? Even if Söderblom, from his

1. p. 48. 2. p. 64.

psychological viewpoint, answered the question regarding the relation between melancholy and the feeling of guilt in Luther in such a way that the anguish and vexation of spirit have lost some of their essential theological meaning, there remains, however, as an indisputable merit the fact that Söderblom has put the problem so sharply and clearly that it cannot further be circumvented by researchers.

While Söderblom's special Luther researches are essentially of a psychological nature, Billing, on the other hand, while considering the timely fundamental theological thoughts Söderblom had given expression to in his treatise, "Revelatory Religion," proceeded to follow out the historical-systematic investigation of Luther's views which he had planned in outline and begun in the work previously mentioned. The thought of God's activity, as mentioned previously, God's objective acts in history, as the ultimate condition of salvation, becomes one of the fundamental theological concepts of Billing. This thought forms the red thread in Billing's unfinished work, "The Ethical Concepts in Primitive Christianity in their Relation to its Religious Faith".[1]

He has given a summary of the leading thoughts in this work in "The Atonement" (1908), which, in spite of its brevity, is one of the works which has exerted, perhaps the greatest influence on the recent decades of Swedish theology. Long before the advent of dialectic theology Billing has presented in these

1. 1907, 2nd. enl. ed. 1936.

works the positively sustaining elements offered by this theology. And before A. Schweitzer and other German theologians held forth eschatology as a constituent element in Primitive Christianity, Billing came to emphasize the decisive significance of the eschatological viewpoints for the understanding of the Gospels.

The specific nature of Biblical Religion in contrast with Hellenic culture, is the main theme of Billing. The philosopher in Hellas corresponds to the prophet in Israel. The two stand each in his own sphere as carrier of the spiritual life. But this life is in both instances essentially different. The attitude of the prophet towards life was shared by Jesus and the apostles and is essentially that of Christianity. The phrase: "Nothing new under the sun", applies to the Hellenic viewpoint; for the Biblical it is: "Behold, I make all things new".[1] According to the former, existence is a quiescent, timeless, cosmos; according to the latter, existence is life, drama, history. As in the case of the prophets, Jesus was not sent to communicate a doctrine, but to accomplish a task. The Gospel is not a teaching, but a message filled with dramatic tension. Existence is not permeated by a rationalistic self-evident light, but it is filled with wonders.

Grace is not something self-evident for Jesus, likewise, for him the union of grace with justice does not imply a rationalizing

1. Rev. 21: 5.

adjustment, a cheapening compromise between the two. This union is essentially a secret, the mystery of reconciliation. "My Father worketh even until now",[1] this word, often cited by Billing, he interpreted as meaning that God through Christ is continuously operative in the faithful in Christ. For Billing the entire emphasis lies on this, that the work of Jesus is altogether an expression of God's own activity. According to Billing, Paul also thus viewed the work of Jesus; the death and resurrection of Jesus, Paul understands as an expression of the selfsame activity of God.

This view, on the part of Billing, as to the meaning and uniqueness of the Gospel, goes hand in hand with his interpretation of Luther and of the formal and material principles in the views of Luther and the Reformation. In the matter of Luther's teaching as regards the Word as a means of grace, Billing writes in, "The Greatness of Luther":[2] "One seldom considers to what extent this is a new doctrine. For Catholicism, the Word, written as well as spoken, was and is merely teaching and law—and a means of edification; grace, regenerating, mysterious grace, is exclusively united with the sacraments; they alone are means of grace. For Luther the Word is not only a means of grace, but the means of grace, to the extent that the sacraments become means of grace only through that word of promise, connected therewith, and which faith appropriates and depends upon".[3]

1. Joh. 5: 17 R. V. 2. 1917; Swedish Christian Students' Movement, Series No. 73. 3. p. 25.

And the Word as a means of grace implies that it is "just as Gospel that it is the means through which God himself *deals* with us, as he formerly dealt through Christ himself during the days of his life on earth. In other words, it is the means through which the Lord Christ continually comes to us and enters into fellowship with us. It is the means, as Luther most often expresses it, through which the Spirit works and is imparted to our hearts". [1]

Only by insight into what the Word is for Luther, can one understand the central thing in his reformatory message, the concept of forgiveness. "Only when one sees clearly that forgiveness is not only a subjective experience, but that it comes to us in the Word and always is offered with the Word—no matter where and how it meets us: as baptism, as the word of preaching, as holy communion, as the word of fellowship—then only does one realize how *pure* is his concept of grace. Faith is not a condition of forgiveness, but is itself a work of forgiveness, as is also the repentance necessarily connected therewith". [2] And forgiveness is the comprehensive expression covering God's dealings with the individual, as well as his objective operations in history.

One might say that Billing's entire theological thinking is essentially orientated and determined by his study and interpretation of Luther. When Billing writes about "Our Calling", [3] it is the main lines of Luther's teaching about our calling he elucidates. His

1. p. 25f. 2. p. 27f. 3. 1909, 4th. ed. 1920.

interpretation of the Church concept in "The National Church and Preaching" (1912), and in "The Swedish National Church (1930), and the summary of his entire theology, with its cardinal points about election, the cross, the resurrection, etc., which he gives in his "Pastoral Letter to the Ministers of the Diocese of Västerås" (1920), all has its deepest anchorage in his unceasing meditations on Luther and the concepts of the Reformation.

And when Billing treats of Luther, he always eventually returns to the point with which Luther's entire view either stands or falls, the concept of justification, of forgiveness. His treatment of Luther thus has a pronounced character of systematic theology, in line with Luther's own intentions. In "Our Calling" he writes: "Never think you have come to grips with a Luther concept until you have succeeded in reducing it to a simple corollary to the concept of forgiveness". "One could take all the main thoughts of Luther and express them somewhat as follows: the Church is forgiveness of sins, the sacraments are forgiveness of sins, liberty is forgiveness of sins, our calling is forgiveness of sins". [1]

Billing's own theological thinking was indeed thoroughly influenced by his unceasing occupation with Luther's central concepts, but only once did he have occasion to intervene in writing in the German Luther discussions. This was done in the treatise he published on the occasion of the Reformation Festival at

1 p. 7.

Uppsala University, October 31, 1917: "1517-1521. A Contribution to the Question about Luther's Course of Development in Religion and Theology, I". [1]

The period in Luther's development, which Billing investigates, is the time from the beginning of the indulgence controversy to the Diet of Worms. This period is comprehended in the abbreviation, "1517-1521" in the title.

While Billing maintains that the theses on indulgences marks the borderline between Luther's pre-reformation and reformation periods, yet he shows at the same time how Luther's reformatory standpoint, in several important respects, is not yet fully attained in 1517. Luther attacks the sacrament of penance itself, in its traditional form, at this time only in an indirect way. He is willing even to let indulgences remain, if only the proper insight as to their import is maintained. The authority of the Pope remains intact as far as he is concerned, and he has himself later admitted, that at the beginning of the indulgence controversy, he was "the most rabid papist", prepared to kill all who in any way refused obedience to the Pope. The holy circle of the seven sacraments was for him in 1517 not yet broken. [2]

At that time he had not yet broken with the monastic system. But in 1521 his standpoint is essentially different. Then he maintained explicitly that the Pope is of the devil.

1. Annual Bulletin of the University of Uppsala, 1917.
2. pp. 3-13.

Then he had in "De Captivitate" proceeded to a destructive criticism of the whole sacramental teaching of Rome, the most revolutionary act of the years of struggle, and with this he had directed the mortal stroke against the hierarchical system. Then he had also definitely broken with monasticism. [1]

In spite of the advanced position which the year 1521 signifies in comparison with 1517, Luther's reformatory position, according to Billing, can nevertheless in certain respects be said to exist in essentially complete form already at the earlier date. In this connection Billing refers to the 97 theses of September 4, 1517, to which Luther himself assigned a much greater importance than the 95 theses of October 31, the same year, but which have become obscured for posterity by the indulgence theses. [2]

In the 97 theses Luther had invited to discussion "Contra Scholasticam Theologiam," Against the Scholastic Theology, and consciously appeared as a reformer, certainly not of the Church, but of theology. Here he goes to the attack of the scholastic theology and its philosophical authority. He has already at this time arrived at the point of maintaining the total ethical inability of the will and rejection of liberum arbitrium, the free will. And he characterizes the entire theology of his day accusingly as Pelagianism. Naturally, these theses form the theological background for the 95 indulgence theses, and in the

1. pp. 11-14. 2. p. 16.

indulgence controversy he derives his theological arguments from the former. [1]

According to Billing the situation is that while Luther in principle already in 1517 had arrived at his reformatory views, these were not yet complete in all their implications and ramifications. The problem for Billing then is this: "To what extent was the teaching, by which Luther declared himself to be bound, in a conscience taken captive by God's Word, already developed at the beginning of the period in question—in what measure does this teaching form the pre-requisite for the struggles and activities of this period, and in what measure is the teaching a product of these struggles?". [2]

Having set forth how Luther's period of "inner" development, and his specifically "reformatory" period cannot be demarcated by a certain date, but that they overlap and mutually condition one another, so that his inner development as reformer continues after the outer work of reformation has begun, and also that the outer reformatory work in its progress gives impulses for the deepening and strengthening of the inner development, Billing then proceeds to an investigation of the problem in hand in the actual Luther research.

He submits how, on the one hand, the newer researches, with unprecedented zeal, have concentrated on the question of Luther's inner course of development up to 1517, but that, on the other hand, the question has never

1. pp. 17-19. 2. p. 4.

been seriously posed as to whether the years after 1517 did not register a change in the reformer's fundamental religious concepts.[1] An exception to this is presented by O. Ritschl, who, according to Billing, has offered "the most important contribution, in the sphere of the history of ideas, which the recent Luther literature has brought forth".[2]

In the joyful surprise over the rediscovery of Luther's lectures on Romans, 1515-1516, Karl Holl champions the view that Luther already at this time has reached the high point in his reformatory views. In contrast with this, O. Ritschl, in the second volume of his Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus, Protestant History of Dogmas, makes the claim that after the aforementioned lectures, and after 1517, Luther's views were still in a state of progressive development. This with reference to especially two things: in the matter of assurance of salvation, and justification. According to Ritschl, only after the outbreak of the indulgence controversy did Luther take the full step so as to allow assurance of salvation to comprehend also the present life, whereby faith takes on "its full significance of trust ('fiducial')". And only after the lectures on Romans, 1515-1516, is justification understood—not as "an actual regenerating process proceeding throughout life"—but as an act of imputation, "God's declaring of the believer to be just". While Ritschl's view is shared by Grisar, a line of investigators stand more or

1. p. 23. 2. p. 31.

less close to Holl's view, among those mentioned by Billing being: R. Seeberg, Loofs, Böhmer, and others. [1]

The problem for Billing thus primarily concerns the question as to the place and meaning of assurance of salvation in Luther's inner development during the period 1517-1521. The second question, regarding justification, Billing has not considered in this unfinished work, of which only the first part has been published. Billing utilizes two pronouncements by Luther, from the beginning and end of the period, to set into extraordinary relief the significance of the problem of assurance of salvation. In one of the antipelagian discussions, at the beginning of the period, Luther uses consciously and methodically the argument, that man cannot be sure of God's grace, and thus cannot be assured of salvation. In, De libertate christiana, Of Christian Liberty, from the close of 1520, he proceeds, on the other hand, "from the full, personal assurance of salvation as the distinguishing characteristic of the Christian life, which gives it its Christian character in both its religious and ethical aspects". [2]

Faith then for Luther is not combined with full assurance of salvation to the same degree at first as it came to be later. As previously stated, Ritschl presupposes a development in Luther's views, but in order to solve the problem he makes a distinction between assurance of salvation to be, in the future,

1. pp. 27-37. 2. pp. 39, 40.

which Luther at the earlier stage counted on, and the assurance of the salvation already given in the present, which characterized his later standpoint. [1] Billing, however, does not consent to this distinction, since in the assurance of salvation there is the combined aspect of the grace of God already received in the present, and the promise of complete salvation in the future.

The object of faith for Luther, in the earlier as well as the later stage, is, according to Billing, both the present and the future. The personal possession of God's gift of grace in the present, is for Luther the basis of the assurance of salvation, as well as its pillar of support, both in the earlier and in the later stage. The difference between the earlier and later stage is that the basis and pillar of support mentioned, has attained added stability and richness at the later stage, and that the assurance therefore along the whole line is made effective with more consistency and power. [2]

The result of Billing's investigations is imbedded in this thesis. This result is finally illustrated by a confrontation of the Romish and Lutheran views regarding the assurance of salvation. According to Rome's view, Luther's statement as to the desperation inherent in the Christian life, was an expression of godless arrogance, and his teaching regarding the assurance of salvation, independent of all merit, was an elevation of false presumption to the status of Christian duty. For Luther, on the

1. p. 52. 2. p.69.

other hand, the half-assurance of the Catholic, based on his own merit, was false presumption, false belief, idolatry; and behind the half-assurance there was hidden the arrogance of self-righteousness.

Einar Billing's closest professional colleague for many years on the faculty of theology at Uppsala, N. J. Göransson, has, in his sole Luther monograph, "Luther's Reformation—An Historical-Psychological Delineation of Faith" (1920), occupied himself largely with the same problem as Billing. But Göransson points out how "no one has depicted the appearing and irruption of the Reformation with emphasis on the motives, the basic presuppositions, the spiritual individuality and uniqueness of the reformatory faith". Here he wishes to fill in a gap. The treatise, therefore, does not aim to describe the events of the Reformation, but, with the help of these, to throw light on Luther's struggle for his evangelical faith.[1] The aim is to study the inner ideational side of Luther's views.

Billing did not bring to a conclusion his study of Luther's inner development during the important period, 1517-1521, but one can surmise, that if continuation had followed, the main emphasis would have fallen on 1518-1519. It is just these years to which Göransson pays especial attention. Göransson's treatise falls into two parts, a predominantly historical section (Chaps. 1-10), and a predominantly systematic section (Chaps. 11-18).

1. p. III.

In the first part the chief interest centers in the question as to the point in time when Luther discovered the Gospel, or advanced to a full understanding of Paul's doctrine of justification. Proceeding from the foreword to his collected writings, written by Luther in 1545, published at that time, and assiduously used by investigators, including Otto Schul and others, Göransson asks if the period in question is to be placed as early as 1518-1519, that is, at the time of the second commentary on the Psalms and the Leipzic disputations. Everything depends on how one is to interpret Luther's words in the foreword mentioned, that he had understood the doctrine of justification and arrived at Biblical assurance only after having read the Scriptures seven years both privately and in public. If the time limit "seven years" is referred to his private Bible study, and if this is assumed to have commenced when he received his Bible in the convent, then one arrives at the year 1512 or 1513. But since the time limit "seven years" just as easily can be referred to his public work of teaching, and this having commenced at the earliest in 1512, then one arrives at the year 1519.

As Göransson attempts to arrive at a conclusion in this matter, the first commentaries on the Psalms of 1513-1515, even the earliest parts of these, above all the lectures on Romans of 1515-1516, assume importance for him. Göransson consequently places the time for Luther's evangelical crisis very early, before

1513,[1] a view that has been shared by several later investigators.

In the more systematic section of Göransson's treatise there are especially two questions of interest in connection with the subsequent Swedish Luther research, namely his treatment of Luther's God-concept, and his faith-concept. In regard to the God-concept Göransson has clearly demonstrated that God's essence, Deus ipse, according to Luther, is love, and also that unresolved contradictions inhere in his total idea of God.[2] Göransson has had a clear insight into the tensions in Luther's God-concept, between Deus absconditus and Deus revelatus, the hidden and the revealed God, between God as love, on the one hand, and God as holiness, righteousness, and omnipotence, on the other, between essentially an apologetic-intellectual feature and an antirational-paradoxical one.

In the space of ten pages, Göransson has said all of signifiance that can or should be said, regarding Luther's faith-concept. He senses that faith with Luther can be viewed from the point of view of knowledge as assent, when it has the eternal truth as its object, but "here he has reference to a soteriological not a metaphysical viewpoint," according to Göransson. He sees that faith with Luther is "altogether practically motivated." He clearly delineates the difference between the Lutheran "sola fides", by faith alone, and the Catholic "fides caritate formata", faith formed by love.

1. p. 131. 2. pp. 219-238.

He presents Luther's differentiation of "saving faith" and "operating faith", "abstract or absolute faith", and "concrete, composite or incarnate faith". He explains the inner intimate side, the "mysticism" in Luther's faith. He treats of the question regarding faith and assurance, and maintains, along with Billing, that the assurance factor was there from the beginning, but increased in time in strength and clarity. He explains the significance of faith as confidence and its relation to contrition and distress of salvation. He determines the essence of faith from a certain point of view very tellingly, in such a way that "the soul knows the Word through faith as God's personal word to himself, gives his assent to it, or surrenders to it, takes hold of it and retains it", but at the same time he submits that faith itself is not a human quality, but a gift from God. [1]

N. J. Göransson has dedicated his Luther monograph to Einar Billing, "the fine and warmhearted connoisseur of Luther's theology". Through his work, Göransson has also shown himself to be a fine and warmhearted connoisseur of Luther. He has given his work the subsidiary title, "An Historical-Psychological Delineation of Faith", and it is just in the ability to give such a delineation that Göransson's unique scholarly qualifications have come to light. He combines with the historical mind a fine psychological understanding of the object of his research. He has

1. pp. 238-248.

a sharp and penetrating insight, though never getting lost in trifles, but always retaining contact with essentials, in perfect spiritual harmony with his object of study, Luther. For this was a characteristic of Luther, that he always had in view the essentially and centrally religious, and no matter where he began at the periphery, he soon stood at the very center. Thus can be indicated in epitome the result of Billing's and Göransson's Luther researches.

II

The impulses for the subsequent Luther research in Sweden came originally from the theology of Northern Sweden through Söderblom, Billing, and Göransson. This, however, does not mean that Luther was neglected or pushed to one side in the theology of Southern Sweden. Schartaunism in Southern Sweden exerted from time to time a pronounced influence in the theology of that section. The high-churchly theology of Lund, from the middle of the nineteenth century, laid claims to represent consistently the viewpoint of Luther. Natural prerequisites existed, therefore, for the concentration about Luther, which characterizes Pehr Eklund, the most unique figure in the theological faculty of Lund at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The treatise of Pehr Eklund, "The Apostolic Faith in Martin Luther's Explanation of the Catechism (The Heart of the Layman's Bible)" (1897), has been designated as his

main theological work. In the foreword he points out how he has been influenced by Schartau in his home, in school, and confirmation preparation. Schartau became a teacher for him first and foremost because he directed attention to "Luther's remarkable children's book with its simple message". Eklund pictures before his inner vision, how "Henrik Schartau, under the temple dome at Lund, with Luther's Catechism in his hand, made his mighty contribution to the Church life of the North".[1] And Eklund's own theological thinking comprises chiefly comments on Luther's Smaller and Greater Catechism.

Among Pehr Eklund's meditations on Luther's comments on the catechism, we pause here only before his treatment of the Lutheran faith concept. "It was particularly the *evangelical* interpretation of the faith-concept, which was rediscovered by Luther. When Luther makes use of the word faith, he means always confidence, and the faith-concept, against which he mainly turns, is the pedagogic one" that is, the one "in which faith is made *assent* and nothing else". "The essence of faith can", Eklund continues, "be most briefly expressed thus: Faith is *trust*, personal trust in God himself, looked on exactly as a personal object of faith, thus faith in God's word, that is, faith in God himself, as he personally reveals his inner self to our knowledge and thereby wakens our confidence. Unfortunately the evangelical concept of faith has

1. pp. I-III.

not always been understood, in this its purity, throughout the history of Christianity. Since the days of the Apostles, it is in fact Luther who has first brought this concept to light". [1]

This fixing of the Lutheran and evangelical faith-concept as confidence, in contrast with assent, manifests definite influences from the Ritschlian theology. Because this theology dealt exactly with the problem of faith as personal, subjective experience and the resulting confidence, in contradistinction to faith as assent. The anti-metaphysical character of the Ritschlian theology had the result, that faith, in the evangelical sense, is understood exclusively as a practical act, trust.

The question regarding the significance of the Lutheran faith-concept has been made an object of investigation by Magnus Pfannenstill in his treatise, "Luther's Faith as Trust and Knowledge". [2] It is clear that Pfannenstill also moves in the problem category characteristic of the Ritschlian theology: faith either as subjective experience, or as assent. Now, he does not answer this question by an unconditional either, or, but by both-and. Pfannenstill finds it self-evident, that faith with Luther is in essence a practical act, fiducia, confidence. "Faith meant saving faith, trust in God's grace and pleasure. Nothing else". But he does not overlook that faith also comprises a factor of knowledge. The question for Pfannenstill becomes, how

1. pp. 64-79.
2. 1918, Annual Bulletin of the University of Lund.

"with Luther faith as confidence relates to faith as knowledge, and of what nature this knowledge, imparted in faith, really is ".[1]

The Nominalistic (Occamistic) theology, in which Luther had been nurtured, really knew faith only as authoritative knowledge. God was conceived as arbitrary will. Since God's relation to man thus was not the expression of his own being, but was only temporarily fixed within Scripture and the teachings of the Church, the knowledge of these became merely authoritative knowledge, to which man must blindly conform. Also Luther looked on God as primarily will. But he was not the arbitrary will, bound by no kind of norm. He had an opus *proprium*, a personal work, which had as its object to save. The will was the expression of God's very being.

As soon as we "with Luther have learnt to see the emergence of God's own being in the Divine will, so that in the forgiveness of sins we have an expression of what God is at heart, then the way is opened, and this Divine will can, as it were, appeal to our inner personal being, and can grip our soul. There arises here a personal relationship between God and man, which we can analyze psychologically, since it is primarily a direction of consciousness". Here, according to Pfannenstill, is found the starting-point for a new orientation of theology: "Instead of being founded on the principle of authority, it comes to be built upon practical experience, on life

1. pp. 1-18.

events". From the point of view of knowledge, faith is thus to be understood, not as the knowledge of authority, but as the knowledge of experience. In faith as empirical knowledge we find a combination of its nature as knowledge with its character of confidence.

Again, in the measure that authoritative knowledge is placed on a par with assent, as is done by Pfannenstill, he then moves not only in the question category characteristic of the Ritschlian theology, but he also answers this question in a Ritschlian way: faith with Luther implies in its essence confidence and subjective experience in contrast with mere assent.

But, on the other hand, Pfannenstill now points to a series of expressions by Luther, where he "champions a rational authoritative faith, which does not take account of the witness of religious experience", a faith thus, which is out and out assent. Pfannenstill's explanation of this aspect of Luther's faith-concept is typically Ritschlian: "It is Luther, the Medievalist, we meet in these and similar expressions. We could speak of an unresolved residue from the earlier Nominalistic viewpoint".[2]

Finally, it is characteristic of Pfannenstill's treatment of Luther's faith-concept, dictated as it is by the Ritschlian standpoint, that he feels inclined to guard Luther's faith-concept against accusations of subjectivism.[3] Such accusations have been wont to be directed against the theology of the nineteenth century, especially

1. p. 6. 2. p. 25, 26. 3. p. 27.

the Ritschlian.

As a link in the history of Swedish Luther researches, the clear and pregnant treatment of Luther's faith-concepts by Pfannenstill, is of extraordinary interest. Much later in this research, as we shall see, the same category of questions in which Pfannenstill moves, has made itself operative.

III

Gustaf Aulén chanced to have the greater part of his academic labors centered at Lund, but his theological provenience belongs to Uppsala. While the Swedish Luther researches have in great measure been brought forward by him, he has himself been influenced by Söderblom, Billing, and Göransson. Aulén can perhaps be regarded primarily as a disciple of Söderblom. Several of the principles, in the sphere of general theology, which we have encountered in the treatise by Söderblom, "Revelatory Religion," previously dealt with, Aulén has applied in his analysis of evangelical Christianity and in his interpretations of Luther.

This has reference to Söderblom's presentation of the personal feature in the evangelical God-relationship, and of the dualism characteristic of the Gospel, as over against the fundamentally monistic viewpoint of the Ritschlian theology. It has reference also to his understanding of the Christian consciousness of sin as the expression of man's

total reaction at meeting with God's infinite holiness; as well as his emphasis on God's activity, God's objective acts as the sole ground of salvation.

When Billing sees the history of salvation as a drama, this has undeniably been of significance for Aulén, not only generally, in the determination of the unique character of evangelical Christianity, but also in his interpretation of central portions of Luther's views.

Finally, without doubt, Göransson's presentation of the unresolved contrasts inhering in Luther's total God-concept, has not been without significance for Aulén's delineation of Luther's God-concept ("gudsbild"), as we shall seek to further elucidate.

As a researcher in Luther, Aulén follows mainly a program of investigation already to hand within Swedish theology. Einar Billing had not completed his investigation of Luther's teaching regarding the state, much less dealt with Luther's Church-concept, which entered as the third point in the program of investigation set up by R. Sundelin: the family, the state, and the Church, according to Luther.

In his investigation, "In Elucidation of the Lutheran Church-concept—its History and Value" (1912), Aulén deals with Luther's Church-concept and places this in an immense perspective. Certainly the new view of the Church in general, which appeared during the first decade of the twentieth century at Uppsala, has been of significance for Aulén in his investigation of the Lutheran Church-concept.

On the other hand, Aulén's work gave a scientific form to the new ideas and made it possible for these to be fitted into a comprehensive perspective in the history of ideas.

Aulén submits that Luther has developed his Church-concept in polemic opposition to the Roman conception, and points to a dialog between the Church of Christ and the Church of the Pope in the treatise, "On the Super-Christian, Super-Spiritual, and Super-False book by Bock Emser of Leipzic" (1521): "The Holy Church of Christ speaks thus: I believe in a holy Christian Church; the mad Church of the Pope speaks thus: I see a holy Christian Church. That one says: the Church is neither here nor there; this one says: the Church is here and there. That one says: the Church does not rest on any person; this one says: the Church rests on the Pope. That one says: the Church is not built on any thing temporal; this one says: the Church is built on the Pope". [1]

It would be singularly misleading to draw the conclusion from this statement that Luther drew a distinction between the visible and the invisible Church, and that he himself sponsored a spiritualistic view of the Church.

"The Church of Christ, as to its inner essence, is a communal creation of the Gospel. Where the Gospel is operative, there also is the Church—die Gemeinschaft der Heiligen, The communion of saints, — there it also is continually created and sustained. To be sure,

1. p. 16.

as seen from this viewpoint, the thought is completely eliminated, that the Church could be some outwardly determined communion along Romish lines.....The holy communion, created by the Gospel, is a spiritual magnitude, and as such an object of faith, never an outward communion, whose boundaries would be possible of observation. But, this does not imply that one needs to be in doubt as to the existence of the Church", Aulén continues. "This certainty rests on our assurance that the Gospel of God is not without fruit, such is Luther's impregnable fundamental view: God's word does not return void. The Gospel is an unfailing 'sign' of the existence of the Church. Wherever the Gospel is, there is also the Church of Christ. Rome or any other power is not a sign of Christianity". [1]

If the Gospel is the subject and foremost principle of the Church, according to the word: The Word and the Sacraments.....constitute and build up the Kingdom of Christ, then it must be free to exert its power, Aulén maintains, and adds: "Thus intimately are Luther's idea of the Church and his reformatory program knit together". [2]

In order to rightly understand the idea of the Church, its connection with actual, historic life must be taken into consideration, Aulén has consistently maintained. But another connection must also be considered, namely the connection of the Church-concept with dogmatics, its connection with the rest of the

1. p. 17. f. 2. p. 18

Christian faith content.[1] This connection is clearly seen if the Church-concept is placed in relation to the concept of revelation. This is done in the last part of Aulèn's treatment of Luther's Church-concept. Here Aulén writes: "The tap-root of the Lutheran Church-concept is Luther's new deepened insight into what revelation, the Gospel, the grace of God, really is".[2] In close connection with this stands Luther's new view of the Word and of faith.

The result of Aulén's investigation of the Church-concept according to Luther, he indicates in the following manner: "Luther has created a fundamental, integral Church-concept, which combines ideality with a sense of practicality, or, stated more specifically, which is able to comprehend both the Church as an object of faith and at the same time its character of historic communal actuality".[3]

However, the result is not confined to clarifying one isolated point in Luther's view, but Aulén has actually already in this initial Luther research laid hold of a whole series of fundamental aspects of Luther's views, by means of Luther's Church-concept, as is evident from the section where Aulén places the idea of the Church and the concept of revelation in mutual relationship.

The Church-concept thus leads Aulén to a realization that the God-relationship with Luther is conceived in a purely personal way, in contrast with the half magical-materialistic conception of Rome. Also it leads him to

1. p. 4. 2. p. 73. 3. p. 69.

realize that with Luther the ground of justification and salvation is in God himself alone and in his dealings through Christ; also that faith is nothing else than the personal acceptance of God's sin-forgiving grace; that God in Christ always acts through the means of grace; and that the saving Word is nothing else but revelation itself.

His next more comprehensive Luther research, Aulén has presented in, "Luther's God-concept ("gudsbild"). An Outline Sketch" (1926).[1] Before we give more detailed attention to this matter, it will be of interest to pause somewhat before Aulén's review of N. J. Göransson's treatise, "Luther's Reformation", in The Bible Student, 1921.[2]

Aulén submits in this review that he finds it "highly commendable, that Göransson has so strongly emphasized, that Luther's theological thinking, as it were, proceeds through antitheses". In the chapter on the God-concept we are placed, Aulén points out, "before the antithesis between the revealed and the hidden God, between God's love and his condemning justice, and also between a more rationally motivated God-knowledge, on the one hand, and on the other hand the strongest assertion as to the blindness of our reason in the matter of the knowledge of God"; also the antithesis within Christology, between "Christ's humanity

1. Supplement to Invitation to Doctor of Theology Conferment in Lund, 1926, Annual Bulletin of University of Lund; later included as Section Five in the outline sketch of Dogmatic History given in "The Christian God-concept," 1927.
2. p. 261. ff.

—through and through" and "Christ as the eternal Son of God, placed in the context of Divine revelation". [1]

According to Aulén, the antithesis between the hidden and the revealed God, "is the truly fundamental antinomy in our religious thinking". It reveals an antithesis within God himself, between his "sovereign and contending will," it shows how God's sovereign will must realize itself in a struggle against that which opposes this will. According to Aulén, the antithesis between God's love and his condemning justice, is not to be compared with this antithesis. It does not penetrate, as it were, so deeply into the very being of God. Because God is "nothing but pure love and goodness," according to Aulén's citation from Luther, God's law and justice represent his opus alienum, alien work, but God's love and gospel, his opus proprium, personal work. [2]

Finally regarding the antithesis within Luther's Christology, referred to by Göransson, one does not need to speak of a real antithesis in Luther, according to Aulén. Because "the historical Jesus" could never for Luther be the "ground and object of faith". The content of Luther's Christology, according to Aulén, is that in Christ we meet "God himself—nothing less than this". In trying to deduce something different than this from Luther, the situation, according to Aulén, undoubtedly is this, that one is tied up with a "later problem formula and its reference to the historical Jesus". [3]

1. p. 264. 2. p. 265. 3. p. 266.

The interesting thing in this review by Aulén is that here, whether in agreement or disagreement with Göransson, he indicates several viewpoints which become dominant in his subsequent Luther researches, especially his treatise, "Luther's God-concept".[1] As Aulén treats of Luther's God-concept under the heading, "Unity in Contrasts", one is reminded of how Göransson, in the treatise reviewed by Aulén, maintains, that Luther's God-concept represents an "integral concept", in which are found "antitheses, which he does not resolve", or in any way try to harmonize. Neither does Aulén try to see in Luther a smoothing out, but rather a "dynamic synthesis".[2] But Aulén does not speak as Göransson does of the "God-idea", but of the God-concept, or God-picture, since it is for Aulén not a question regarding a single doctrine or a certain phase of Luther's viewpoint, but rather his total faith outlook. And for this the God-concept, or God-picture, is an expression.

From the God-concept Aulén proceeds to a presentation of Luther's total view. Luther's reformatory achievement did not consist in a reduction of the variegated faith concepts existing up to that time, nor yet in a mere repetition of something given earlier, but in something new, through which the Gospel once again became a living power. Unity with Luther is not gained, as with Thomas, through "a

1. I quote here from "The Christian God-concept", 1927, p. 159 ff..
2. p. 166.

resolving synthesis of the dialectical" nor yet, as within mediaeval mysticism, through "a gliding from one motif to another" but rather through "a tension-filled unity of the faith-life itself, a synthesis, within which is contained surging life and inner conflict, but where the integral view is not lost". In this tension-filled unity of the faith-life, the thought of God's love and God's wrath are combined; likewise are combined the thoughts of, God's love and power, God's omnipotence and his struggle against an opposing evil power, the revealed and the hidden God, God's nearness to us and his remoteness from us. [1]

Aulén has herewith broached a number of hazardous problems, which inhere in Luther's God-concept. In order not to go astray, he seeks out "the point of reference, which for Luther manifestly is the immovable point". Christ is this point of reference, when it is a question of understanding the quality of the God-concept. As over against law and reason as sources for the knowledge of God, Luther places Christ. Not the law, not reason, but Christ is the way which leads to the God, who justifies the sinner. And in Christ we meet God himself and the Divine majesty. Because, as Aulén quotes from the Larger Commentary on Galatians, "to give grace, peace, eternal life, to forgive sins, make righteous, make alive, set free from death and the devil, that does not inhere in the power of any created being, but that belongs only and solely to the Divine

1. pp. 161—173.

Majesty". For Luther it can thus not be a question of proceeding from the historical person of Jesus as a ground for faith, as is done within the Ritschlian theology. [1]

When the revelation of God through Christ is placed over against the knowledge of God through reason and law, there arises the problem of the double God-knowledge, "the picture of God through faith, and through ordinary means". The God of ordinary knowledge is for Luther "the God of nature and the God of law", but not the justifying God. This, however, does not imply that Luther, with Marcion, separates power and justice from the God of love. Luther's God is at once "the omnipotent God and the God of judgment," but the motifs of power and judgment are fused in "the fire of Divine love". [2]

Thus it becomes possible for Aulén, proceeding from his main viewpoint, to explain, how love and wrath (justice) enter into Luther's God-concept in such a way, that the wrath is brought into the service of love, and the moralistic and legalistic mode of view is overcome; and also to explain how omnipotence and love are placed in such relationship to one another, that the conception does not descend to naturalism. On the one hand Luther maintains to the limit God's omnipotence, and on the other he emphasizes the evil power opposing God, and the necessity of God's struggle against it. Here the dualism in Luther comes near to the breaking point. And yet the

1. pp. 178, 179. 2. pp. 188—197.

God-concept of Luther is not shattered, but maintains its integrity. With the thought of the Divine victory is combined the thought of the struggle and the omnipotence, yet without introducing a rational explanation of the world. [1]

Earlier interpretations of Luther held that Deus absconditus (the hidden God) with him was a residue of the rationalizing view of Scholasticism. But Aulén shows that the absconditus thought with Luther stands as a barrier against the rationalization of faith. God is the inscrutable one, not only in judgment and rejection, but also, and especially so, in his love and salvation. Inscrutability is the characteristic of revelation itself. "Luther sees Deus absconditus *in revelato*" (in revelation). The same tension-filled unity inheres in faith's consciousness of God as the one, who is infinitely near to us, while at the same time the distance between him and us never can be fully bridged. [2]

In his treatment, in "Luther's God-concept", of how legalism and moralism are overcome in Luther, Aulén has touched on Luther's teaching on the atonement. Referring to Söderblom's statement: "A powerful dualism courses inexorably through the life of Luther", he has pointed out the deciding role played by the dualistic motif in Luther's teaching on the atonement. He had likewise maintained, that "the main viewpoint, as to the saving and atoning work of Christ, was itself of a

1. pp. 198—229. 2. pp. 229—234.

dramatic character." "Christ is the great champion and conqueror, who fights with, conquers, beats down, and annihilates all the tyrants under which humanity suffers: sin, death, law, wrath, hell, devil, etc." [1] These thoughts he elaborates more fully in his Olaus Petri lectures on "The Christian Concept of the Atonement" (1930) (Translator's title, "Christus Victor"), where he sees Luther's teaching on the atonement as "a reviving and deepening of the classical view of the atonement". [2]

From what has been said above it can doubtless be deduced, that Aulén's interpretation of Luther's view of the atonement is not to be understood apart from his delineation of Luther's God-concept as a background. Just as Luther's God-concept does not represent an isolated point in his doctrinal view, but is an expression of the total attitude towards evangelical faith, in the same measure Luther's view of the atonement cannot be regarded as an isolated feature. When Aulén sees the vital point in Luther's view of the atonement in the battle and victory motif, then the atonement thus viewed becomes an expression of the dualism, and the tension-filled unity prerequisite in dualism, which characterizes Luther's God-concept, and his interpretation of Christianity in general.

A special group of Aulén's Luther studies comprises the writings in which he places the views of Luther in the context of the history of ideas and the history of dogmas. While, in

1. pp. 203—208. 2. p. 172 ff.

the already cited review of Göransson's treatise, "Luther's Reformation," he entertained certain doubts as to the advisability of connecting Luther's views with the old Church, now, in the article, "Luther—the Divider," [1] he maintains that Luther has gathered to himself "the richest inheritance" from the preceding era. "Undoubtedly there resides a certain hint of comedy in the idea that Rome should have any kind of monopoly on what precedes the Reformation, and that Evangelical Christianity should be a sort of new beginning, which has disinherited itself with regard to the common heritage of Christianity....The common heritage belongs as much to Evangelical Christianity as ever to Rome, certainly, at bottom, it is ours with much greater right". [2] And in the treatise, "The Old-churchly and the Reformatory" (1930), [3] he submits that "the central old-churchly motifs are, in the highest degree, effectively operative in Luther's theology". [4]

The picture of Aulén as a Luther researcher would perhaps be largely incomplete unless one considers the fact that he concedes to the Luther research itself a decisive significance for the new orientation in the presentation of dogmatic history, which just now is a crying need. In "The History of Dogmas in the Light of Luther Research" (1932), he shows

1. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1926, p. 222. ff.
2. p. 230.
3. Supplement to Invitation to Doctor of Theology Preferment in Lund, 1930. Annual Bulletin of the University of Lund, vol. 26, No. 3.
4. p. 20.

how the presentation of dogmatic history up to now has stood under the influence of Harnack's monumental dogm-historical work, but how this, in its very point of departure, has labored under obscurities and contradictions. Here, Aulén maintains, the modern Luther research has made invaluable contributions. Because it has opened and sharpened our insight into what is intrinsically and specifically Christian. It has shown that the intrinsic character of Christianity resides in a certain very specific God-relationship, namely such a relation between God and the sinner, which God himself has constituted through Jesus Christ. As over against the unclear and vacillating attitude of Harnack, there is here given a clear and distinct norm for genuine and specifically Christian faith, whatever its course in the human history of ideas.

While Arvid Runestam as a Luther researcher can be said to represent a different type, as compared with Aulén, the difference between them can not be indicated as though Runestam foremost is a disciple of Einar Billing, because Aulén also has, in many respects, learnt from Billing, as we have already pointed out. Nor does the dissimilarity reside in this that they have reached different, irreconcilable conclusions. Runestam has given his unreserved recognition,from a factual point of view, to Aulén's foremost Luther treatise, "Luther's God-concept". In a review of this work, Runestam writes, that it gives "an excellent picture, from a comprehensive perspective,

of Luther's theology"[1]. The difference between them lies essentially in the different scientific methods, which they represent. They not only maintain differing modes of procedure as systematic thinkers, as is clearly evident from the discussion between them in the first and second volumes of The Swedish Theological Quarterly, but also in the field of dogmatic history. It is the difference in this latter respect, which we here have to consider.

Runestam not only gives recognition in a factual sense to Aulén's "Luther's God-concept", but he welcomes with apparent satisfaction, that Aulén has "penetrated from 'the idea', from 'the teaching', from the more or less systematically formulated 'theology', to the 'integral', the 'fundamental view'".[2]

But the correspondence between Aulén and Runestam is nevertheless in this instance not so complete, as would appear from this. This is demonstrated in Runestam's article "The Object of Dogmatic History", which he wrote with reference to Aulén's, "The Christian God-concept"[3], "The person who is to be made the object of a dogm-historical investigation, can be looked at as in different degrees of development, as a theologian strictly speaking, or as one 'on the way' to theology", according to Runestam[4]. What for Aulén constitutes the difference between idea (God-idea) and picture (God-picture, "gudsbild", elsewhere trans-

1. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1926, p. 360.
2. ibid, 1926, p. 361 f.
3. ibid. 1928, p. 376 ff.
4. p. 377.

lated, God-concept), or total faith-outlook, Runestam sees as differing, psychologically determined, positions in a certain subject. He attempts to penetrate from the superficial stratum of "idea" into the deeper lying psychic act of the "apperception", "the fundamental view, or outlook" ("åskådningen", "grundsynen").

But Aulén manifestly does not view, the matter in this way. "The fundamental view, or outlook," "the picture", does not have value for him as representing a primary religious experience above the "idea", but rather "the picture" ("The God-picture") comprises the fundamental view, the total faith-outlook, which explains the otherwise disparate and non-understandable elements in Luther's faith-interpretation, and binds them together into a religious and factual whole.

The method which Runestam recommends for use in the history of dogmas, is subjective-psychological in the sense, that the matter of first importance is to determine the positions of different persons or faith-subjects as far as these positions can be psychologically determined. The method Aulén has used is factual-theological in the sense, that the task is to understand a given faith-view, whether that of a certain person, or derived from certain historical material, in relation to its own religious-factual context.

Runestam sets as the task for the history of dogmas "to depict a person's theological or dogmatic or religious views"[1]. This task is

1. p. 376.

fulfilled most nearly by a psychological method. In conformity with this, he has in his first Luther study, "Luther's Inner Development as a Reformer" (1916), given a psychological analysis of Luther's spiritual development.

Runestam has made a particularly central and important line of thought the object of investigation in his doctor's dissertation, "Christian Liberty in Luther and Melanchthon" (1917). With regard to the concept of liberty in Luther, he does not proceed so as to follow its outgrowth from the Catholic view. Because, he maintains, "Christain liberty is a concept not to be sought in the field of Catholic Church teaching, but is something unique for the Reformation". [1]

He begins the investigation by an analysis of the contents of De libertate. From there he looks back to Luther's reformatory views and pauses especially before the Commentary on the Psalms (1513-1516), and the lectures on Romans (1515-1516). Here he can largely employ the historical development viewpoint in order to demonstrate how Luther's reformatory views appear successively. [2]

When Luther's views after De libertate, 1520, are treated, it is impossible to follow exclusively a historical-developmental mode of treatment, since Luther's views as of 1520 remain essentially the same. There Runestam employs a method, launched earlier by Billing, namely, a combination of the historical and systematic methods, which allows the historical-

1. p. 7. 2. pp.10—37ff.

developmental viewpoint to assert itself within the framework of the systematic divisions, as far as this is possible to carry out. Here are treated the extraordinarily important questions: freedom of conscience, freedom from the law, Christian liberty as over against civil authority, law and order, etc.

In the analysis of De libertate in the introductory chapter, Runestam gives a deeply penetrating psychological interpretation of the concept of religious liberty in Luther in its early distinctly reformatory formation. The kernel of the entire investigation is perhaps the treatment of freedom from the law. The object of the law is to create a consciousness of sin. It has thus nothing to do with the Christian, but it is so much more needed for the crude multitude. But at the same time Luther emphasises the importance of the law for the old man within the Christian.

The contrast between the Christian and non-Christian has as its parallel the contrast between "the new and the old man" in the Christian, as for instance "conscience and body", "flesh and spirit". "Thus the conscience may be free from the law, but the body must obey the law." This contrast is not only of a moral, but of a religious nature. The freedom of the conscience from the law, involves, "that, in regard to righteousness before God, it has nothing to do with works".

The flesh represents the principle opposed to faith, the spirit represents faith. This implies that man, as flesh and spirit, belongs to

two opposing orders, law and Gospel. In the analysis of these fundamental concepts, in their connection with Luther's teaching on justification, Runestam displays the fine psychological sharpness of observation, which is unique with him. His special scientific qualifications here truly accrue to the benefit of the Luther research.

The freedom of the conscience is thus for Luther of a religious character in the main. Only faith, which unites man with Christ, makes him free in a religious sense. But the freedom of the conscience also has an ethical implication. Only the conscience set free through faith makes man able to do good works. Morality is thus moved into the very center of the religious life. There is only one focus in Luther's theology.

The two freedoms, the religious and the moral, are combined in Luther most readily in the concept of the spirit, Runestam maintains. Spirit no longer means for Luther the willingness and ability to do the good, as in the case of his pre-reformatory standpoint. To live in the Spirit is for him now "nothing less than to have Christ living in us, so that it is he who acts in man"[1].

In the foreword to his second larger Luther treatise, "The Freedom of the will and Christian Liberty—an Investigation into Luther's Theology" (1921), Runestam submits that "a treatment of the freedom of the will in Luther's theology points in several ways to the

1. pp. 169, 170.

other concept of freedom, the freedom of the Christian"[1]. This Luther investigation thus constitutes a natural continuation of the foregoing. The main point of interest centers in the treatment of Luther's view in De servo arbitrio, Of the Captive Will, especially the problem of predeterminism, predestination, and "naturalistic" determinism. The self-evident point of departure is the constant declaration of Luther, "that we ourselves have no freedom of the will, as pertains to God and his kingdom". The question Runestam sets up for investigation is: "How much of the determinism, which Luther here avows, is sustained by the religious interest, that is, interest in the Gospel, and assurance of faith in regard to forgiveness, according to his own view of the matter, and in actuality?"[2]

Considering the question as to whether the Divine will, which stands back of an event, necessarily is unchangeable, or whether it is contingent and changeable, Luther, according to Runestam, expands his determinism into a real predeterminism, and places the necessity of an event in relation to God's foreknowledge and predestination[3]. But Luther is led, so Runestam further submits, not to stop with a religiously motivated determinism, or with the religiously less valuable concept of predestination. He proceeds on to a "naturalistic" determinism, in that he lets the phrase, "omnia necessitate divina facimus", we do all by Divine necessity, apply to the ungodly and the

1. p. III 2. pp. 57, 60. 3. p. 62.

devil himself. "With this assertion, Luther introduces an entirely new conception of God. God is no longer the personal one", but "an impersonal sort of natural force, which unceasingly works and works and can not do else but work", "a religiously and morally indifferent force". "Here Luther has thus undoubtedly introduced a conception of God, which can with difficulty be placed alongside, either the God of grace, towards whom faith is directed, or the God of an arbitrary will,....before whose eternal decrees one must bow without presumptuous questionings"[1].

In order to understand Luther's intentions, it is important however, to observe, "how easily and freely for his thought this irreligious conception of God changes over into a purely religious mode of thought, by the simple means, of letting the god of this world, the devil, take the place of the god conceived of in a naturalistic sense. With this, Luther is again back to the fundamental religious view. We belong either to the kingdom of Christ or the kingdom of Satan. That which does not belong to Christ; to whom else could it belong than to the devil?" With this Luther is once more in the midst of the polemic against that freedom of the will, which has ever been the object of concern. Because the struggle between God and the devil is nothing else than the struggle between God's grace and the free will[2].

Essentially the same thoughts are present-

1. pp. 67, 69. 2. p. 71 f.

ed by Runestam in his orienting introduction to G. Rudberg's Swedish translation of De servo arbitrio, "Of the Captive Will" (1925). For the investigation of Luther's concept of Christian liberty, Runestam had taken De libertate christiana as a point of departure. To J. Svennung's Swedish translation of this treatise by Luther, "Of the Liberty of a Christian" (1929), Runestam has prefixed an, "Introduction to Luther's theology with the guidance of his treatise on Christian Liberty".

In the treatise, "A Catholic Critique of a Lutheran Distinction",[1] he has appropriated the results of his investigation of Christian liberty in Luther, and comes to grips with Max Scheler's criticism of the Lutheran ethics. Here he seeks also, on the part of evangelical ethics, to present an emulation concept which, nevertheless, is not to imply imitation, but lies in the line of faith; thoughts which he has later developed in his treatise, "Love, Faith, Imitation" (1931).

In a more popular form, in several essays, such as "Luther's Fundamental Reformatory Views" and "Luther and We", which are included in, "Lectures on Religion and Morality" (1920), he has presented the results of his researches in the larger Luther works. In the main it can be said of Runestam as of Billing, that his theological thinking concerns or returns to Luther. The essay, "Luther and We" shows, that along with the psychological

1. Supplement to An Invitation to Doctor of Theology Preferment in Uppsala, 1924, Annual Bulletin of Uppsala University, 1924.

interest there is also, in Runestam closely combined with this, a practical-pedagogical interest. He brings the investigation over from the scientific plane to a practical plane, lying near to us, in such a way that he analyses the psychological import of the problem and applies it to the psychological situation of the man of today.

IV

Even if Aulén and Runestam, in regard to the interpretation of Luther's views, in many respects agree, they nevertheless assume differing standpoints in a methodological sense. The situation, namely is this, that not only, as was previously mentioned, did Runestam give his unqualified recognition to Aulén's delineation of Luther's theology in his chief Luther treatise, "Luther's God-concept"; but also that Aulén has explicitly supported Runestam in his perhaps most serious critical remark against Luther, as regards his inclining to a naturalistic God-concept in the treatise, Of the Captive Will[1].

While Runestam essentially represents a psychological method, with the task of understanding differing aspects of Luther or expressions by him from the viewpoint of the conditions governing the soul life, and moral-religious experience, Aulén has set as his theological-factual task to clarify Luther's views with reference to their own religio-ethical con-

1. cf. G. Aulen: The Christian God-concept, 1927, p. 222.

text. In this respect Aulén and Runestam may be said to stand as exponents of two distinct tendencies within the most recent Swedish Luther research.

Like Aulén, Anders Nygren sets as his task to clarify and to understand Luther's views with regard to their own inner factual connections. While Aulén seeks to present and to understand Luther's theology from the viewpoint of the God-concept as an expression of the total faith-outlook, Nygren proceeds from the Christian conception of love as agape in contrast with the ancient eros-concept, as he sets out to clarify Luther's views, in their specifically Christian, evangelical uniqueness, in the final section of his great work, "The Christian Concept of Love through the Ages: Eros and Agape, I-II" (1930,1936).

In the fundamental determination of the eros-agape pair of concepts, Nygren stands in essential agreement with the Catholic theologian Max Scheler. This writer has namely fixed the Christian conception of love as agape in contrast with the ancient notion of love as eros, in his particularly instructive investigation, "Resentment in the Upbuilding of Morals", included in, "Of the Subversion of Value I".[1]

Even if Nygren has a forerunner in Max Scheler in the principal fixation of the fundamental concepts eros and agape, and thus in the point of departure, in his determination of the Christian concept of love through the ages, cannot be considered as original, yet he has

1. 1919, 2d. ed. of Abhandlungen und Aufsätze I, 1915.

made use of the pair of concepts in question in a way not observable in previous research. This in order to give an extraordinarily clear and comprehensive picture of how the eros and agape motifs have stood in tension-filled struggle with one another, within the history of Christian ideas, during the early Christian centuries. Also he has shown how they have been combined into a caritas (love)synthesis in the transition to the middle ages, and how they have essentially parted company with the arrival of the modern era.

When, in the final section of this treatise, he sketches Luther's ethico-religious views as an expression of a renewal of the agape motif,[1] his exposition of Luther's theology becomes characterized by an extraordinary clarity, due to the comprehensive perspective, in the history of ideas, in which he places Luther.

Fundamentally, Luther constitutes the goal and point of aim for the entire investigation of the Christian Concept of Love Through the Ages, the greatest and most important of Nygren's works. As a proof of this, note the motto, derived from Luther, specially from the 28th thesis in the Heidelberg disputation, which Nygren has prefixed to the entire second volume of his work: "Amor Dei non invenit sed creat suum diligibile, amor hominis fit a suo diligibile" etc. Luther's line of thought, according to what Nygren indicates, is this: God's love does not find its object as already

1. II, p. 500 ff.

at hand, but creates this himself and brings it forth, but human love is created and brought forth by the desirable nature of its object, since it is itself desirous. The latter is characterized by seeking its own in everything, and would rather receive than share its bounties.

With this Luther is not conscious of having said anything else than what is generally recognized by all, whether philosophers or theologians. He refers directly to Aristotle. But the Divine love is of a contrary nature. It shares the fulness of its wealth. It seeks out the sinners, the evil, the foolish and weak; makes them righteous, godly, wise and strong, and thus displays its spontaneous and creative nature. In what Luther calls human and divine love (amor hominis, amor Dei) Nygren sees a full correspondence with eros and agape, the ancient and the Christian love. And it is clear from the statement by Luther, referred to, that he sharply distinguishes between them, and shows their distinct characteristics. In this distinction, according to Nygren, lies, briefly stated, the contribution of Luther to the history of the Christian concept of love.

Eros piety has an egocentric reference, since it has its root in selfish desire. As similarly indicated in a previous treatise, "Primitive Christianity and Reformation"[1], he submits, in "The Christian Concept of Love", that, "Luther's main objection to the Catholic form of piety always is this, that it puts the self in God's place".[2] As the foremost component in the

1. 1932, p. 109 ff. 2. II. p. 501.

"Copernican Revolution", undertaken by Luther, Nygren, just as Karl Holl,[1] finds that, "Luther sees himself as the herald o religion in its struggle against by the name of egocentricity"[2]. Nygren thinks that Luther had new reformatory position already on Romans, 1515-1516. He these: "Let all 'that is in us' be t destroyed....contrarwise, let, all t of us in Christ, be built up and pl second component in Luther's revolution, Nygren finds to be, that Luther places communion with God on "the human plane", instead of "on the plane of God's holiness," as it was formerly considered[3].

According to Nygren, Luther's contribution to the history of the Christian concept of love, is a breaking down and a building up: the caritas synthesis is broken down, agape love is built up. Since the caritas synthesis, as it was present already with Augustine, at bottom is determined by the egocentric attitude, Luther's struggle against caritas becomes a breaking down of the eros type of piety in the field of Christianity.

As components in Luther's unrelenting battle against the eros tendency, Nygren refers to Luther's rejection of every thought of personal merit, his refusal of every attempt to ascend to God by way of reason or speculation, his powerful refutation of the reaching up of mysticism, when he recommends to "detest as

1. cf. for ex. his essay, "Was ferstand Luther unter religion?" in Gesammelte Aufsätze I, 1927. 2. ibid.
3. II, pp. 501, 503.

a veritable pest the mystical theology of Dionysius and similar books"; his battle against self-love, even in its refined and sublimated form, and his rejection of "fides caritate formata"[1].

How Luther places "sola fides", by faith alone, as over against "fides caritate formata", faith formed by love, and how this marks a decisive trait in Luther's faith-view, has earlier been presented even within Swedish Luther research. Compare for ex. what has been said above regarding Göransson's treatment of Luther's faith-view. But thanks to the comprehensive and profound perspective in which Nygren places the treament of this question, its development with Nygren becomes characterized by an extraordinary clarity.

Nygren maintains that Luther has succeeded in his work of tearing down[2]. What he puts in its place, according to Nygren, is the Christian love, agape, in its unique character. In Luther's concept of love, Nygren encounters essentially the traits, which he finds characterizing agape in contrast with eros, according to his fundamantal definition[3]. The comprehensive expression for the uniqueness of agape is its spontaneity. It is spontaneous in contrast with every eudemonically motivated action, as well as all legalism. It is spontaneous, furthermore, in the sense of "quellende Liebe," welling love, but also so that it has no respect of persons. Finally, it is spontaneous in contrast with every rational consideration, and is as such, "eine verlorene Liebe," a lost love: "It belongs to

1. II, pp. 518—534. 2. II, p. 540. 3. I, p. 171.

love to allow itself to be deceived"[1].

As Luther, in fully concrete terms, depicts a love in strict antithesis to the love which seeks its own, he gathers its traits from the love of God[2]. And this love becomes possible in the life of a Christian, because he is placed between God and his fellow man.

The Christian has no center of love's power within himself. The love, which he is able to give, is only that which he has been permitted to receive from God. "In faith he receives God's love, in love he gives it in turn to his neighbor", Nygren submits, and adds a specially pertinent utterance by Luther: "faith and love, through which man is placed as a means between God and his neighbor, which receives from above, and gives out again below, and thus becomes like a vessel or conduit, through which the well of Divine good will flow without fail to other people"[3].

In the section on Luther in the great work on, "The Christian Concept of Love", Nygren's Luther research has reached its zenith and, so to speak, its concluding synthesis. A large part of his previous investigation could be considered as preparatory to this. Already in the article "Eros and Agape. Outline of the History of Ideas in Christianity",[4] he has sketched his essential view of the two fundamental motifs, eros and agape, and the struggle of these two motifs in the history of ideas, together with Luther's position in this history.

1. II, pp. 544—550. 2. II, p. 551. 3. II, pp. 552, 553.
4. Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie 6. jg. 1928/1929. p. 690 ff.

Since the eros concept represents the deepest religious motif of the Hellenic world, and the expression of the general structure of Christianity can be sought not only in agape, but also in pistis, faith, which especially is apparent from the Lutheran "sola fides", Nygren proceeds, in his article, "Eros and Pistis",[1] to an investigation of the question whether, just as well, or perhaps, more correctly, the eros of Hellenism could be compared with the pistis of Christianity. The answer Nygren gives is twofold. Essentially, in the comparison of eros and agape, the latter can be replaced by pistis, since "the talk about justification by faith alone has no other meaning or purpose than just to emphasize that man's justification and communion with God, alone has its ground in God's unmotivated agape. 'Faith alone' has no other meaning than 'agape only'". But with reference to the factual history of ideas agape cannot be replaced by pistis, since not pistis but agape has from time to time been confused with eros[2].

The egocentric religious attitude, bound up with the eros motif, and the theocentricity belonging together with the agape motif, Nygren has essentially analyzed in the article, "Egoism and Religion".[3] In several smaller treatises he has, from various viewpoints, sought to assign Luther's place in the history of the Christian concept of love, as in "Luther's Copernican

1. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1933, p. 115ff.
2. pp. 121, 122f.
3. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1927, p. 129 ff.

Revolution",[1] and in "Luther's Significance for the Christian Concept of Love",[2] which investigation he has in main published in Swedish in the article "Den kristna kärlekstanken hos Luther"[3], the Christian Concept of Love with Luther.

At times he treats of separate aspects of Luther's views against the background of the history of ideas. In the festal treatise, "Simul iustus et peccator, Just and Sinner at the Same Time, in Augustine and Luther",[4] he illustrates rather sharply one side of Luther's teaching on justification against Augustine as a background. It appears that Luther has gone as far as it is essentially possible to go, in the denying of all human merit before God, when he maintains that even the saints' best deeds are nothing but sin, for which they must ask forgiveness. And yet he does not stop with this, Nygren asserts. "In the sixth thesis of the Heidelberg disputation, there meets us the explanation, tremendously offensive for the whole Catholic tradition, that not even God's own works, which he performs through men, can be absolved from likewise being sin"[5]. In "Atonement—a Work of God" (1932), he places Luther's concept of the atonement in a comprehensive historical systematic context. Especially noteworthy here is his correction of the oft-appearing interpretation of Luther's statement, that one must be saved in order to be able to do what is good.

1. Zeitwende 6. Jg., 1. Hälfte 1930, p. 357 ff. 2. Luther-Jahrbuch Jg., 1929, p. 87 ff. 3. Svensk teologisk kvartalskrift 1930, s. 3 ff. 4. To Gustaf Aulén 15-5-1939, p. 245 ff. 5. p. 259.

Salvation has for Luther nothing to do with man's natural endowment, but is the same as God-communion, that is, to stand under the active intervention of God's grace and love[1].

A special group of investigations comprises such as where Nygren confronts Luther's views, especially his ethical, with the Catholic viewpoint, and out from Luther seeks to establish the evangelical view of life. Already in the large treatise, "Philosophic and Christian Ethics",[2] Nygren gives a general diagnosis of the intrinsic character of Lutheran ethics. Following a fundamental investigation of "The Autonomy of the Ethical Judgment"[3], he reaches the conclusion that the concept of the good with Luther, in contrast with Catholicism, has its foundation in an absolute evaluation; this result is reached in his analysis of "The Concept of the Good according to Evangelical and Catholic Viewpoints".[4]

In a more penetrating manner he has determined the relation between "Evangelical and Catholic types of life", in the treatise, "Religiosity and Christianity"[5]. He has defined the Evangelical type of life in distinction from the Catholic type, principally in two ways, from the points of view of the pietistic and the ethical types of life, as follows: "The Catholic type of piety is characterized by this, that man himself stands at the center of the religious relationship; the Evanglical type of piety, on the other hand by this, that God is the center

1. p. 35 f. 2. 1923. 2nd ed. 1932. 3. Swedish Theological Quarterly 1925 p. 38 ff. 4. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1926, p. 20 ff. 5. 1926, p. 84 ff.

and the Lord of the religious life"[1]. Again: "The Catholic type of life is characterized by this, that the good is done for the sake of reward; the Evangelical, on the other hand, is characterized by this, that the good is done for its own sake"[2].

Nygren, like Aulén, sponsors the method of understanding Luther's view with regard to its own inner factual solidarity. One might say regarding Nygren that he has applied this method with stricter consistency than perhaps anyone else. According to Nygren, everything in Luther finds its explanation from the consistent application of the agape attitude. Like Aulén, Nygren also seeks to place and understand Luther in the context of the history of ideas. But Aulén had also maintained, that the searching out of Luther's views has a significance for the systematic-theological understanding of the uniquely Christian on the whole.

In order that the picture of Nygren as a Luther researcher may not be too sketchy, we must consider how just this penetrating into the religio-ethical viewpoint of Luther, has enabled him to depict "the uniqueness of the Christian ethos",[3] and thus via Luther attain to a systematic-theological understanding of the content of the Christian life. "This is", he says, "to live *of God's love* (religiously), and to live *in God's love* (ethically); it is to receive God's love (justification by faith), and to be an organ for God's love, so that it can proceed onward

1. p. 90. 2. p. 98. 3. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1939, p. 299 ff.

to others(the fruits of faith)"[1]. This is the sum and substance of Nygren's own Luther interpretation.

Torsten Bohlin can in a sense be characterized as the antipode of Anders Nygren within Swedish Luther research. While the latter mainly follows the same method as Aulén, Bohlin stands closer to Runestam, who also in his methodological considerations directly refers to Bohlin[2].

For the understanding of the method in Bohlin's Luther research, his treatment of Luther in "Faith and Revelation—a study of the crisis in theology and, 'the theology of crisis'" (1926), presents itself as a suitable point of departure. The treatise mentioned comprises essentially a critical presentation and scrutiny of the dialectic theology, designated by Bohlin as "the theology of crisis." In the third chapter he undertakes a comparison between this theology, on the one hand, and Luther and Kirkegaard, on the other, who have been set forth as the authoritative exponents of this theology[3].

Runestam had presented as a methodological requirement to differentiate psychologically between a conceptually formulated theology and a religious experience, which only was "on the way to theology". Bohlin applies such a method when he contends, regarding the representatives of the dialectic theology, that there exists an inconsistency between their"intention"

1. p. 303. 2. cf. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1928, p. 381. 3. p. 100 ff.

and their "theology". "Here, as is often the case elsewhere, there is a fundamental disparity at hand between the personally experienced spiritual content, and its conceptual formulation"[1].

As regards the relation of the dialectic theology to Luther and Kirkegaard, according to Bohlin, the situation is this, that this theology has linked itself up with the "paradox aspect" in Kirkegaard, but not with his "religio-experiential line of thought, which has an inner solidarity with Luther's reformatory views". And yet Kirkegaard had expressly set forth, that "Luther's religious greatness stands or falls with this, that 'personal appropriation' or 'ardor' constitutes the deciding factor in Christianity"[2].

Bohlin further submits that it is "just that Kirkegaard whom we meet in the line of religious experience, who feels himself at home as a disciple of Luther". The "factual-psychological view of man as a subject, new-created by grace," which inheres in Luther, must not be overlooked, Bohlin asserts. "Certainly, Luther emphasizes in a thoroughgoing manner, that man must not build on his feeling, and only on the righteousness *extra nos, outside of us.* But by this he does not wish to deny, that the new life is to be understood as a sentient psychological fact. We do not feel this at all times—then we would aleady be in heaven, and not on the earth. But on the other hand, according to Luther, it is impossible that it should not be felt at least at times"[3].

1. p. 152 f. 2. p. 140. 3. pp. 144—151.

The line of experience, which, according to Bohlin, is found in Luther "at least at times", is nevertheless made by Bohlin into the main line for his investigation of Luther's theology in the great treatise, "God-faith and Christ-faith in Luther" (1927). He wishes namely here to test Luther's views as to their experience content, and asks "to what extent the standpoint Luther takes, on the strength of inner experience, consistently is carried through, or is broken through, when he theologically explains and expounds his new God-view and concept of salvation"[1].

Bohlin pursues a psychological method as the one which eventually alone is capable of yielding systematic clarity regarding Luther's views. "No matter how tension-filled and unsystematic Luther's theology may appear, it possesses in every instance an organic unity, in the personal solidarity of the religious self of the reformer, determined by an integral intuition. The massive thought sections, which collectively must be looked upon as Luther's theological thought structure, but which cannot piece by piece be inserted into an integral plan of construction, presuppose this intuition, although it may not always be apparent with equal clarity. Therefore, it lies in the very nature of things, that every historic-systematic investigation of Luther's views must remain unsatisfactory, if it does not also clarify the connection with Luther's religious life, his God experience". "The psychological-religious

1. p. 83.

interest" is "a systematic concern"[1].

The close relationship of the psychological method with the problem structure of 19th century, especially the Ritschlian, theology is more clearly apparent in Bohlin than in Runestam. In "Faith and Revelation," Bohlin had contended, that "Evangelical theology certainly does not need to renounce its heritage in connection with the tremendous contribution, represented by 19th century theology, all the way from Schleiermacher and on, but rather..... to continue the line, which can summarily be characterized by the words: direct religious experience and immersion in the history of revelation"[2]. Faith has its given place and meaning in "the theology of religious experience".

Alongside of the factor of trust, belonging to religious experience, Bohlin indicates "a metaphysical ingredient" in Luther's faith view[3], a distinction which reveals a marked Ritschlian influence. This influence reveals itself still more clearly, as Bohlin, in the major treatise, "God-faith and Christ-faith in Luther", takes up and further develops Runestam's critical remark against Luther, as we have already noted, that in De servo arbitrio he momentarily has allowed the concept of omnipotence to revert to a naturalistic, irreligous god-conception.

According to Bohlin, in De servo arbitrio, Luther has expanded "the strictly monergistic mode of view" into "a general religious determinism," which implies, "that God does not repudiate his promise to save, but unchangeably

1. pp. 1, 2 2. p. 153. 3. p. 150.

adheres to it and, in his omnipotence, breaks down every opposition that is raised against its realization". But with this purely religious thought as to the unchangeableness in God's eternal gracious will, Luther combines "a concept of unchangeability conceived in an abstractly metaphysical manner," namely the thought that "all that happens" "happens of necessity by the strength of God's omnipotent will". In Luther, therefore, according to Bohlin, there are interwoven "a purely religious postulate and a non-religious abstractly metaphysical line of reasoning", of which only the former is to be found in the line of religious experience[1].

The psychological method in dealing with Luther, however, leads Bohlin to a more far-reaching criticism of his view. Luther, namely, according to Bohlin, expands "his inner experience of salvation as a work of God through and through, which the will of man can neither prepare nor further, to serve as a ground of explanation for all that happens in general— without being conscious of that he by this transforms the subjective, concrete experience into an abstract metaphysical theory"[2].

As regards Luther's own development of these questions in De servo arbitrio, according to Bohlin, it is "not essentially a question of two lines of *thought*, which here clash with one another, since Luther's 'thinking' in De servo arbitrio shows itself to be dominated by an attempt to carry through the concept of impersonal metaphysical omnipotence"[3].

1. pp. 272, 273. 2. p. 274. 3. p. 283.

Since Luther, at the same time, is not able to relinquish "the ethical certainty as to responsibility and guilt, or the religious certainty about God as the Holy One, the thought of man's personal responsibility and the thought of God's essential goodness enter in as inalienable, yet heterogeneous elements in the deterministic view as a whole"[1]. While Aulèn, who had posed as his task to try to understand Luther's views in a factual-theological manner with respect to their inner religious solidarity, saw "a tension-filled unity", a "dynamic synthesis," in Luther's God-concept; the psychological method of Bohlin, on the other hand, leads him to the result that Luther's God-concept in De servo arbitrio falls apart into heterogeneous elements.

In Bohlin there emerges, in a striking way, the intimate connection between a method of research and the results of research. Within the subsequent Luther research it has been questioned, whether Bohlin, in the central problem as to Luther's God-concept, has given a correct interpretation, and whether Bohlin's method, mainly adopted from the empirical theology of the 19th century, is suited to clarify the deepest meanings in Luther.

Karl Holl, in his major Luther treatise, "Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchen-Geschichte, Bd. I: Luther", has posed as his task to give a presentation, which does not stop with a detailed analysis, or give merely a psychological interpretation, but arrives at a comprehensive

1. p. 283.

synthesis, takes account of the religio-factual import in Luther's views, and elucidates them from out of their own center.

It is significant, that Bohlin's comprehensive work, "God-faith and Christ-faith in Luther", in many respects comprises a critical coming to terms with Holl's Luther investigations, as it also has been characterized as a contribution to the lively debate centering on these. From this point of view, we shall throw light on Bohlin's work in only a couple of its aspects.

Regarding Holl's analysis of Luther's doctrine of justification Bohlin submits, "that Holl's general point of departure must be characterized as 'dogmatic,' to the extent that he ventures, as a self-evident postulate, to proceed from Luther's view of justification necessarily thought of as throughout fully of one interpretation"[1]. With the psychological mode of view, which Bohlin adopts, it is natural that he supports W. Walther's criticism, "that the 'fundamental error' in Holl's construction of Luther's doctrine of justification, lies in the lack of a clear distinction 'between the justification which occurs in one moment for him who is a mere sinner, and that forgiveness with which a child of God, standing in communion with his Father, may console himself'"[2].

Bohlin submits, that Holl, "in his zeal to maintain the character of the Christian life as a constant new-creation, fails in his Luther interpretation to see that the old selfish will

1. p. 377. 2. p. 373.

does not live on in *the same manner* in the justified as it does in the non-justified person"[1]. The consolation motif in the doctrine of justification, and the emphasis on, that man's will after justification in some manner is the subject of the new life, these are thoughts that otherwise belong to Melanchthon's treatment of questions in this category; but with Melanchthon the psychological method enters seriously into the theological thinking. Bohlin seems to represent a "Walther-Melanchthon type" of interpretation of Luther, due to the psychological method he employs as over against Holl.

While Bohlin counts it as a merit in Holl, that he "with exceptional power has presented the character of reformatory faith as 'ought,' or unconditional duty towards God," he yet regards as a defect "that Holl, in regard to duty, stops with a specifically ethical-religious interpretation without penetrating back of the 'merely' morally religious to the noumenal disposition"[2]. In order to interpret Luther's faith concepts in a psychological way, Bohlin manifestly appropriates the religious psychology of Rudolf Otto.

Bohlin proceeds to a critical settlement with Holl, not merely regarding individual fundamental points, but a special purpose of the treatise as a whole has been, as Bohlin himself states in the foreword, "interest in proving the validity of Karl Holl's fundamental reorientation of the question regarding the place and importance of Christ in Luther's piety and reformatory views". The purpose of the

1. p. 373 ff. 2. p. 467, cf. p. 260.

entire investigation he has here specified to be: "In what relation do Luther's reformatory God-faith and Christ-faith stand to one another? Is it a matter of two independent magnitudes, which only in a more or less outward manner are combined one with the other, or is there an organic unity between the two? Is the object of faith with Luther severed, or is it, at bottom, clearly integrally defined?"[1].

In the introductory chapter, regarding "the question of God as the life problem with Luther", Bohlin submits that the reformatory break-through implies that Luther sees in Christ the concrete, full revelation of God. After dealing with "the quality of the Divine essence", as Luther saw it, and thereby emphasizing the character of Lutheran faith as true reliance on the true God, Bohlin treats in the third chapter of, "The Triune and Only God", and shows how Luther's dependence on the old-churchly manner of view has had the consequence that his Christ-defined experience of God has been forced into essentially naturalistic categories.

This method of characterizing Luther's relation to the old-churchly theology, like the definition of the reformatory faith as essentially trust, shows dependence on the Ritschlian theology. In the fourth chapter Bohlin investigates first the various phases of the absconditus concept, shows thereupon how the God-concept came to be severed in De servo arbitrio, and submits, finally, how the absconditus concept is

1. p. VII.

indissolubly combined with Luther's God-concept. The fifth chapter treats of the significance of Christ for justification.

In an earlier phase, in the lectures on the Psalms and Romans, to and including year 1516, Luther, according to Bohlin, reckons with one God-relationship in justification, unmediated, and one Christ-mediated, but in a later phase he only reckons with the latter. There justification through Christ and on account of Christ also have come to be intertwined, and form a whole. In the sixth and last chapter, which gives a systematic rounding out of the whole investigation, Bohlin answers the main question, posed in the foreword, in such a way, that "Christ-faith and God-faith in no way signify a severance of the faith-object", but "Christ-communion is in itself God-communion, just as, reversed, God-communion, is in itself Christ-communion"[1].

In Bohlin's perhaps most important work, "The Dogmatic Views of Kirkegaard in their Historic Connection"(1925), he has, in the final chapter, placed Kirkegaard's views in the light of Luther's concept of sin and faith. Here Bohlin gives in all brevity a striking picture on the whole, of the fundamental thoughts in Luther's views. Sin according to Luther is not "individual sinful acts or doings, but comprises on the whole all attempts to live one's life in some other way than in dependence on God's grace"[2].

Sin is "disbelief or the revolt of the will

1. pp. 479, 480. 2. p. 451.

against God and its selfish turning away from God". Man is "thoroughly abandoned to sin, and whatever he does, without being driven by faith or by God's Spirit, that is, as a natural being, is sin". Faith means "an entirely new attitude towards life, and an essential reversal of the will as to direction of interest and motion". Luther opposes "religious eudemonism in all its various forms", and his "religious conception is strongly 'theocentrically' orientated"[1].

It is essentially only in one particular, that the psychological method, or the reference to experience as an authority alongside of the Word, changes Bohlin's presentation. He submits how Kirkegaard has appropriated the doctrine of original sin and guilt directly from Luther, but emphasizes at the same time, that this doctrine "lacks all essential coherence with the religious experience line in his dogmatic thinking, and can be made of effect only through an authoritative utterance as a dogma, which simply *must* be believed, not only contrary to human reason, but also entirely unrelated to religious experience". And the "influence from Luther", according to Bohlin, means here "a strengthening of an element in Kirkegaard's dogmatic views, which is fundamentally alien to evangelical Christianity"[2]. In his "Evangelical Doctrine of Faith" (1937), Bohlin likewise does not have any understanding of the Christian doctrine of original sin.

Gustaf Ljunggren presents a main line other than that of Bohlin within the Luther

1. pp. 446—460. 2. p. 466.

research. In his treatise, "Sin and Guilt in Luther's Theology" (1928), the Swedish research has produced one of its most mature fruits. To be sure, Ljunggren proceeds to a critique of Holl on a decisive point, more particularly designated, his interpretation of Luther's doctrine of justification, according to which the perfect, actual righteousness is thought of as the goal (Ziel), to which imputation tends, or, with Holl's own words: "Declaring righteous and making righteous belong intimately together. They relate to one another as means to end".

Against this, Ljunggren remarks: "'Gerechtmachung' making righteous, is made the topmost and final factor, directly in opposition to Luther's undoubted intention, and 'Rechtfertigung', declaring righteous, becomes only 'Grundlage', a foundation, for God's continued dealing with man". "The reason for this peculiar distortion of Luther's thought process", Ljunggren finds "in Holl's strong dependence on the Kant-Ritschlian school, with its ethicizing attitude, a dependence which, even in this outstanding Luther interpreter, has hindered the full congeniality with its object"[1].

In spite of this criticism of Holl in an important point, Ljunggren's comprehension of Luther's theology stands as a whole much nearer to Holl than is the case with Bohlin. Above all, Ljunggren shares with Holl, as with Aulèn and Nygren, the method of seeking first of all to understand Luther's views in a

1. p. 353.

factual-theological manner with respect to their own inner religious solidarity.

While original sin in Luther became for Bohlin's psychological method of observation "an element fundamentally foreign to evangelical Christianity", Ljunggren, on the other hand, begins his work with an investigation of Luther's comprehension of sin as original sin[1]. With Luther it is not a question of sin in a moralistic sense, but of original sin. It is a question of the power of sin, which comes from within and is one with the perverted will of man. The nature of original sin is comprehended by him in the concept of unbelief (infidelitas). And unbelief is pride (superbia, praesumptio) and a false reliance on ones self. Luther has given to original sin, or concupiscence, a wider import than it had earlier. It consists in this that "man seeks his own in everything, even in God". It implies "the self-will, which puts self into the center of everything and thereby does violence to the Divine majesty". And concupiscence refers to "the personality as a totality". No sphere of the soul is left untainted by it.[2]

The chapter on "flesh and spirit" constitutes, in a certain sense, the main part of the investigation[3]. Here Ljunggren treats first of all the difference between the conception of man in the middle ages as compared with that of Luther. The former was fundamentally determined by the antique differentiation of spirit and matter, reason and nature, as

1. chap. 1. 2. pp. 29—33. 3. chap. 2.

constituting the ethical contrast between good and evil. The spiritual and rational belonged to the image of God, but the side of nature should be ascetically suppressed.

Such a view of man Luther defines as that of philosophy or rational science. Against this he puts that of faith. According to this the essence of man consists in that he is created for fellowship with God. And this concerns, not only some part of man, but the *whole* man. Not only a certain higher part of man is good, but, as standing in unrestricted life-fellowship with God, the *whole* of man is good. But Luther also shows, that the original relation to God has been abrogated through sin, and that the entire relation of man has assumed a perverted direction. In his actual condition man is *altogether* a sinner. Man is homo theologicus, theological man, provided he stands in the God-relationship, he is homo politicus, political man, if he does not so stand. Homo theologicus is a correlate concept with the Word. To be a man in this senseconsists in that God speaks to us in his Word.

But man can appropriate the Word in different ways. In the measure that man does not appropriate the Word, but opposes it in selfish attachment to the things of the world, he is "flesh". On the other hand as "spirit" he receives the Word, which in him establishes a true God-relationship. Confronted with the God who speaks to him in his Word, he sees himself as an integral person, who stands responsible before God. With this he knows not

only that he "has sin", but rather that he "is a sinner".

In the analysis of Luther's view of man, Ljunggren has followed up Runestam's investigations as to the distinctions, "flesh and spirit", "the old and the new man", "conscience and body", etc., in Luther, and in this connection has emphasized the aspects "coram deo", before God, and "coram hominibus", before man.

In the treatment of Luther's religious and ethical reflections[1], Ljunggren proceeds from the paradox belonging to faith, to reckon with "God's absolute sovereignty and exaltedness above all that man is," on the one hand, and on the other hand to establish man's "responsibility and duty before the holy God"[2]. Ljunggren has no interest whatever in playing up one factor as over against the other, in order to eliminate one or the other, by pointing to any claim on the part of religious experience. He takes Luther's views as they actually are at hand. He submits how Luther rejected the attempts of mysticism as well as moralism to dissolve the paradox. For Luther both sections of the paradox belonged to the Christian life: "The one does not push aside the other, nor concurs with it, but here there is a question of tension-filled, and yet insoluble mutual inherence. The unique essence of faith consists in just this"[3].

In the analysis of Luther's understanding of "original sin and actual sin"[4], Ljunggren first shows how Luther has overcome the onesidedness in the medieval apprehension, according to

1. chap. 3. 2. p. 148. 3. p. 159. 4. chap. 4.

which original sin became a mere defect, and actual sin the real personal sin. As far as Luther is concerned, original sin is "Personsünde", personal sin. It constiutes man's total attitude, emerges as unbelief, and is realized in actual sin. The same relationship exists between original and actual sin as between faith and works.

The total aspect of man presented by Luther in contrast with the medieval view, does not imply that man is out and out either flesh or spirit, either a sinner or righteous. This question is treated by Ljunggren in connection with Luther's well-known thesis: "simul iustus et peccator"[1]. Luther often uses the expression that the believer is partly a sinner and partly righteous (partim... partim). But this does not imply "an abrogation of the integral viewpoint. Both sin and righteousness is ascribed to the 'whole person' with the same right, as when one says, that a man is wounded, even though the whole body may not be destroyed by wounds"[2].

Sin, for the believer, is not something innocuous, or something once for all neutralized. The believer, foremost of all, "feels truly the whole weight of the condemnation of God's holiness". Through the law comes the knowledge of sin. "The intensified sense of sin is identical with intensified sin. The one who agonizes under the chastisement of the law is, first of all, in the most real sense, 'a sinner'". "Without the law, which exposes sin, sin

1. chap. 5. 2. p. 274.

remains 'dead'". "By looking at self and listening to the voice of the law, in the conscience, the one alarmed over sin can never arrive at peace"[1]. He is altogether a sinner.

A dualism, a lack of peace, dominates the self of the believer. And "that which for Luther gave the dualism within the self its infinitely serious acuteness, was the consciousness that this dualism in the last analysis harked back to a mysterious bondage to objective powers or ordinances outside of man". And release from the dualism also lies in an objective ordinance, not that of the law, but the order of grace, realized through the work of Christ. "Through this the rule of the law has once for all been abrogated. Christ has fulfilled the law, and by this its legal claims have been rendered null and void"[2]. For this reason, sin occupies an entirely different position for the believer than for the non-believer. When he looks at Christ and lays hold of Christ, the law has no longer any power to condemn. He is altogether righteous.

In the treatment of "original sin as guilt"[3]. Ljunggren submits how the sense of guilt with Luther in no sense coincides with the ethical responsibility and the consciousness of having been able to act differently. Sin as original sin is inescapable. The consciousness of sin implies the consciousness of being what one is by will and as will.

The dualism which dominates Luther's view, according to what has been presented,

1. p. 277. 2. pp. 278, 279. 3. chap. 6.

comes further to light in the discussion of the question regarding "God and sin"[1]. Although Luther can refer "all evil, 'das Böse', the bad, as well as 'das Übel', the evil," back to God, he retains "the devil-concept as a shield against every rationalizing of evil, whether in a physical or ethical sense"[2]. As an expression of the dualism in Luther, Ljunggren takes note of the doctrine of predestination and the revelatus-absconditus concept.

Nevertheless, the dualistic motif does not blast asunder Luther's view. At the last "faith penetrates through darkness and struggle to the assurance, that the evil *in the end* avails nothing, and that all is subordinated to the Divine omnipotence. The dualism persists, but only to be constantly dissolved anew, and to further a deeper insight into God's mysteries"[3].

The Luther research, which has stood under the influence of Ritschl, or in the main the empirical theology of the nineteenth century, frequently represents certain aspects of Luther's views as residues of medieval scholasticism. Thus Luther's doctrine of the Eucharist has been characterized as a surviving medieval fragment in Luther. In the festal article, "Luther's Doctrine of the Eucharist"[4]. Ljunggren has placed Luther's doctrine of the Eucharist in direct and organic relation with his evangelical Christian interpretation as a whole, this above all in connection with the investigations of Sommerlath.

1. chap. 7. 2. p. 444. 3. p. 445. 4. The Word and Faith—to Einar Billing on his sixtieth birthday,1931, p. 193 ff.

In a second festal article "Luther and Infant Baptism"[1], Ljunggren has examined different arguments by Luther, by which he seeks to show, that his principle regarding faith as a necessary condition for the sacrament at large, actually also concerns baptism. Ljunggren submits that Luther's arguments in part comprise "motifs, which hardly can be accepted by consistent evangelical thinking in the sphere of faith". He arrives, namely, in certain connections, at such an objectivistic view of baptism, that this is changed into "an opus operatum", effective as an act[2]. "There is in Luther, however", as Ljunggren points out, "a point of departure for a view of baptism, which is shielded against strictures of the kind mentioned above."

"The objective viewpoint with Luther actually never stands wholly isolated He is conscious also, alongside of the faith ascribed to the child, of a subjective factor", namely, "the Church, or the Christian congregation". "When the pastor baptizes, he does so, not only in behalf of God, but also as a representative of the congregation. A true baptism is namely an *act of obedience* from the side of the Church as over against God's Word and institution"[3].

Ljunggren thus interprets and expands one side of Luther's arguments for the validity of infant baptism in such a way, that the Church as an independent factor in its faithfulness would constitute the subjective condition for

1. To Gustaf Aulèn, 15-5-1939, p. 219 ff. 2. pp. 229—2 2-
3. p. 232 f.

baptism, which has its objective foundation in God's own action. One has the feeling that Ljunggren has not said the last word in the matter, and that this depends eventually on this that, in the crucial question—the interpretation of what Luther means by faith—he moves in a psychologizing mode of thought, presupposing an object-subject antithesis, which is foreign to Luther. This again is an indication that the investigation of the faith-concept itself is one of the most pressing tasks of Luther research.

Sigfrid von Engeström has devoted himself to this task in his treatise, "Luther's Concept of Faith, with special reference to the meaning of assent".[1] Previous to this treatise he has dealt with certain aspects of Luther's views in the articles, "The Man Jesus, as a point of departure for the theological thinking of Luther",[2] and "Faith and Experience",[3] which in essential parts have been worked into the second and fourth chapters of the treatise, "Luther's Faith-concept".

Regarding the question, in which main line of Swedish Luther research von Engeström is to be placed, it seems at first as though he could not be fitted into any of them. He submits repeatedly, in the work just mentioned, that the task he has posed for himself is of a "purely historical character".[4] He therefore piles up the material and wishes, as it were, to let this speak for itself.

1. Uppsala University Annual, 1933, Theology 3. 2. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1929, p. 17 ff. 3. The Word and Faith—to Einar Billing on his sixtieth birthday, 1931, p. 76 ff. 4. p. 13, cf. pp. 34, 229.

In order to preserve the historical objectivity, he avoids trying to understand Luther's views as a religious-factual whole, he simply avoids the "integral conception". [1] He contents himself with presenting the material, often in a disparate and heterogeneous fashion, so as to thereby pose questions and problems.

But neither does he represent the psychological method, since that would militate against his demands for historical objectivity, by the urging of some certain religious experience as a norm for deciding what is evangelical or not in Luther. And yet he happens, in a certain sense, to stand under Ritschlian influence in his Luther research, and in this respect he belongs to the same main line in Swedish Luther research as Bohlin and Runestam.

The problem which he treats in "Luther's Faith-concept," he has in a certain sense intimated in the earlier treatise, "Studies on Wilhelm Herrmann's Ethics" (1920). He had there treated of Herrmann chiefly in his relation to Kant, "the philosopher of Protestantism". But Herrmann also stands in another important relationship, namely to Luther, as he there had submitted. When Herrmann as a disciple of Ritschl maintains, that the religious faith implies subjective experience, and not only assent, the question lies near at hand as to what place assent assumes in Luther's faith-concept, which Herrmann has sought to tie up with Kant's moral philosophy. [2]

1. p. 13. 2. p. 8.

Certainly von Engeström does not wish in "Luther's Faith-concept", to "make Luther's views fruitful for the present day by means of an integral view determined by modern problem structures". [1] But the question structure itself, regarding Luther's faith-concept, has, as is seen from what has just been cited, grown out of a relatively modern problem situation, namely that of Herrmann, and with this the concept of faith, of the Ritschlian theology, as essentially subjective experience in contrast with assent.

While von Engeström thus, under the influence of the Ritschlian theology, has raised the question as to the meaning of Luther's faith-concept, he does not answer the question in the way it is often done in this theology, namely, so that the new in the evangelical-Lutheran faith-concept should imply, that the "metaphysical" element has been abstracted, and that faith is understood as trust implying subjective experience in contrast with assent. Von Engeström answers the question in essentially the directly opposite way. He intends undoubtedly to set forth, that the essential thing in Luther's faith-concept so little implies a subjective happening or experience, or on the whole anything subjective in man, that faith instead rather means that the center of gravity in the God-relationship resides wholly in the religiously objective, in what God has done in Christ. But this in itself correct insight he inserts in the problem structure: faith

1. p. 13.

as subjective experience contra faith as assent— and supposes that, since faith is not merely something subjective in man, it must according to Luther essentially be assent.

Thus von Engeström finds how faith with Luther is of an intellectual character, it is assent to doctrines, it is orthodoxy, as is specially presented in the concluding chapter about "assent and faith". Here he contends for ex., that the "*doctrine* of justification comprises for Luther an unforfeitable element in the God-relationship"[1].

If one would gather the result of von Engeström's investigation into one single phrase, it would be the thesis, that Luther with his faith-concept not essentially went beyond the medieval view of faith as assent[2]. This result is undoubtedly quite disconcerting in the present research situation. But it is not new, not even in Swedish Luther research. We have met it earlier in Pfannenstill, who also treats of Luther's faith-concept in dependence on the Ritschlian problem structure

The use of the Ritschlian problem structure, which is foreign to Luther, has also in other respects determined von Engeström's conception. Thus, in the chapter on "Faith and Reason"[3], it has not escaped him that it is especially characteristic of Luther that "reason" most nearly represents the principle of self-righteousness[4]. But instead of treating the problem "faith and reason" under this determining aspect, he treats chiefly the more

1. pp. 254-264. 2. cf. pp. 254, 256. 3. p. 148 ff. 4. p. 165.

"modern" question of "faith and knowledge", which doubtless is a result of his main view of faith with Luther as assent or acceptance of doctrines.

Certainly von Engeström from his main viewpoint as to faith according to Luther, is not able to determine the trust element in faith as only implying subjective experience and an expression of a practical act. He is obliged even here to allow the intellectual factor to be decisive. "The acceptance of the *doctrine* of justification was for Luther an indispensable element in the assurance of God's grace". "In the measure different doctrines about Christ were indispensable presuppositions for faith in his work of salvation, such *doctrines* would enter in as elements in Luther's assurance"[1].

Another question which likewise is brought to the fore by the Ritschlian theology, although von Engeström also there gives another answer than is usual in this theology, concerns what significance "the Man Jesus" has for Luther's faith-view[2]. Von Engeström refers to W. Herrmann and others, who make the human figure of Jesus the real God-revelation but at the same time he submits that Luther's view was entirely different[3].

As to how Luther, in yet another respect, did not fundamentally go beyond the medieval standpoint, is shown, according to von Engeström, by his doctrine of satisfaction which,

1. p. 165. 2. p. 54. ff., cf. the article already mentioned, "The Man Jesus as a point of departure for Luther's theological thinking". 3. pp. 55, 63.

allegedly, is essentially Anselmian[1]. However, such a correspondence between Luther and Anselm is achieved by von Engeström foremost by ignoring the fundamental difference, that Christ's satisfaction for Luther is essentially the same as sustaining punishment, while, according to the Anselmian disjunction, "aut poena aut satisfactio", either punishment or satisfaction, the satisfaction rendered by Christ is not punishment.

In the chapter on "Faith and Experience",[2] which is the most fruitful section of von Engeström's investigation of Luther's faith-concept, he has presented things thought-provoking and of importance for the understanding of Luther's fundamental views. He submits that "Luther did not reckon with a *direct* event or experience of the Divine, which in relation to the teaching of Scripture, were something relatively independent, or which proffered a direct *sensation* of a world, which, so to speak, should lie within 'the clear, dry word'"[3], and that it was "out of the question for Luther, that his own experiences of whatever kind should be able to supplant or surpass Scripture, or that his own experience in any respect should be able to serve as a critical rule in the study of the Scriptures".[4]

Also von Engeström's second larger Luther investigation, the chapter about "Luther's Forgiveness-concept",[5] in "The Forgiveness-concept in Luther and in the more recent Evangelical

1. p. 78 ff. 2. p. 170 ff. cf. the festal article already mentioned with the same heading. 3. p. 224. 4. p. 226 5. pp. 1-169.

Theology" (1928), is to a certain extent conditioned by the problem structures of the Ritschlian theology. In the investigation of the forgiveness-concept, not only in Luther, but also in other theologians dealt with, von Engeström proceeds so as to allow the question of the communion established through forgiveness to come to the front.

Due to the circumstance, as von Engeström submits, that "the expression which, all down the line in more recent Protestant theology, is used to denote forgiveness, namely the establishing of fellowship, is of infinitely manifold interpretations, and that therefore the most variegating thoughts can be tied up with the use of this term",[1] it is evidently a very important matter to investigate more closely the communion-concept, used in connection with forgiveness, and to test the trains of thought connected with it.

With regard to Luther, von Engeström arrives at the quite disconcerting result, that the communion-concept is "unsatisfactory for the clarification of Luther's intentions in the development of the forgiveness-concept"[2]. In place of this, according to von Engeström, forgiveness with Luther comes to imply essentially "the remission of punishment".

In both of these respects von Engeström stands under the influence of Ritschlian trains of thought. When he presents the communion-concept as not suitable to clarify Luther's forgiveness-concept, he understands communion

1. p. 6, cf. p. 125 f., 267. 2. p. 128.

in the Ritschlian manner as "oneness of will"[1]. It is apparent that communion, in this sense, does not lend itself to be used in clarifying Luther's forgiveness-concept. But if God-communion is understood instead so that God wants to have something to do with man in spite of his perversion of will, it is in no sense excluded that forgiveness with Luther can be described exactly as the establishing of communion.

Just as von Engeström, as to the faith-concept in Luther, within a Ritschlian problem structure, gives an answer opposite that usually given within the Ritschlian theology, this happens also apparently as regards the meaning of the forgiveness-concept in Luther. Within this theology it is quite usual to see in the new orientation, arriving with the Reformation, transition from an essentially legal to an ethically determined mode of view.

Von Engeström, having arrived at the insight regarding the communion-concept that, as an expression of a practical-ethical unity of will, or communion of will between God and man, it is not suitable to clarify Luther's forgiveness-concept, there remains for him, manifestly as the only alternative, that Luther as regards forgiveness still thinks in essentially legal categories.

According to von Engeström, God stands forth for Luther foremost as "the judge", and forgiveness becomes essentially "remission of punishment". What von Engeström largely

1. p. 128.

fails to see, since he is also here bound by a problem-structure foreign to Luther, is the positive content Luther includes in forgiveness: "Where forgiveness of sins is, there is life and blessedness." In so far as this must imply that God gives man access to his fellowship, comprising life and blessedness, there is no occasion to reject the communion-concept in the clarification of Luther's forgiveness-concept.

In the festal article "Luther's thoughts regarding Assurance of Salvation in the Commentary on Romans",[1] von Engeström has taken up essentially the same problem as Einar Billing in the treatise already mentioned in connection with the Reformation festival of Uppsala University, the 31st of October, 1917. Like Billing von Engeström here engages in the German Luther discussion, and assumes essentially the same position as Billing towards Otto Ritschl's and Karl Holl's Luther interpretations. As for himself von Engeström finds "the presentation of assurance of salvation in the Commentary on Romans contradictory. Apparently there stand in juxtaposition mutually directly opposite expressions regarding the right of the Christian to believe himself the object of God's favor, to be justified, and possess God's grace"[2].

While Holl had sought to "overcome these contradictions by pointing out that Luther, when he opposes assurance of Salvation, with this merely means, that the Christian never in

1. To Archbishop Söderblom's Sixtieth Birthday, 15-1-1926, p. 141 ff. 2. p. 151.

this earthly life may believe himself to be fully in possession of moral perfection"[1], von Engeström seeks to dissolve the contradictions in Luther by referring to the distinction between faith and experience of faith, as Luther does. "In feeling and thought, in experience, the Christian finds only occasion for fear and trembling". Thus von Engeström sums up the result of his investigation.

"As soon as faith reverts to joy over something which the soul possesses, it has ceased to seek its joy only in *God*. Then the Christian no longer would live in faith and hope. But only in faith and hope, looking away from all that is 'visible,' can man possess God. Not even over the righteousness, with which Christ clothes us, is it permitted the Christian to rejoice and to pride himself. Beyond all that can be called feeling and own opinion, the soul rests on the contrary on the promise of the Divine Word"[2]. As laudable as this result of von Engeström's is, it nevertheless appears peculiar that he so quickly thinks to have finished with Holl's interpretation of the assurance of salvation in Luther's Lectures on Romans. Because at bottom this tends in the same direction as that of von Engeström's own.

The slogan: "For or against Holl" divides in a certain sense the Swedish Luther research into different tendencies. The researchers who stand overwhelmingly critically disposed towards Holl, are at the same time the ones, who stand more or less under

1. ibid. 2. p. 157 f.

Ritschlian influence, or work in problem categories, occasioned by the Ritschlian theology.

V

It has been stated earlier that the history of systematic theology in our country, during recent decades, essentially coincides with the history of Swedish Luther research during the same period. As it is a distinguishing characteristic of the more recent Swedish systematic theology, that it has more and more freed itself from the direct or indirect influence of the Ritschlian theology, the same can also be said regarding the most recent phase of the Swedish Luther research.

Among Swedish theologians Gustaf Aulén is perhaps the one who foremost has come forth in direct opposition to the influence on systematic theology of the Ritschlian theology, especially as this has been mediated through A. Harnack. Refer for ex. to Aulén's dogmhistorical program treatise, "Does the oldchurchly Christology imply a 'Hellenizing' of Christianity?"[1] or his treatise mentioned above, "History of Dogmas in the Light of the Luther Research" (1932).

Anders Nygren has entered into fruitful cooperation with Aulén. It is thus quite natural, as seen from the general theological situation, that the very latest generation of Luther researchers more or less consciously

1. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1929, p. 3 ff.

have loosed themselves from the Ritschlian influence, and have come to belong to that main line within the Luther research, which is represented by Aulén and Nygren and also by Ljunggren.

Ragnar Bring, in his doctor's dissertation "Dualism in Luther" (1929), has directly followed up the incitement offered by Aulén in "Luther's God-concept" (1926), urging Söderblom's expression: "A powerful dualism courses inexorably through Luther's life". Aulén himself mentions the importance he places on the question regarding the dualism in Luther: "Since the time, when I worked on Luther's God-concept, it appeared clear to me, that hardly any problem in Luther's theology would be more worth while to investigate, than the question regarding the dualism in Luther" [1].

However, Bring has not only carried forward Aulén's plan, but also has essentially adopted the method used by Aulén. Bring submits how Aulén has "fulfilled the intentions of Söderblom and Billing" as to "the dramatic-dualistic mode of view" [2]. While Billing has apllied this in line with "historical interpretation by the prophets," Aulén follows another line. As Aulén has remarked against Billing, that behind this "interpretation of history", there lie concealed "remnants of rational metaphysics", [3] Bring also finds, that "Billing's

1. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1930, p. 358.
2. p. 14.
3 Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1929, p. 137.

carrying out of the dramatic historical perspective includes a tendency towards 'historical metaphysics'" [1].

Bring, having shown that the task of theology, according to Aulén, "is not set on the same plane as the prophet's view of history", and also does not imply giving "an interpretation of the religious experience"; or, from the study of "a person's psychological uniqueness" to arrive at "a stratum of experience separated from his own theology, but to sum up the fundamental motives of the religious view, using "the God-concept, as a diagnosis of the faith-attitude"; he then states: "Essentially our following investigation can be characterized, taken as a whole, as a study of Luther's God-concept, in the sense Aulén has accepted this term". [2]

Göransson had already shown how unresolved contradictions are present in Luther's God-idea. Bring enlarges the study to show how Luther throughout employs "conceptions set up as opposites": "flesh against spirit, sin against grace, law against Gospel, faith against unbelief, the new man against the old, or inner against the outer, the free will against the captive, righteousness against sin, God against the devil". [3]

In the most intimate connection with this contrast stands the contrast, indicated by Nygren, between the two attitudes: "the

1. p. 12.
2. p. 16.
3. p. 18.

egocentric and the theocentric," as Bring submits. Even this contrast goes back to the fundamental contrast between God and the devil: "Man's theocentric attitude" implies namely for Luther, "that he is controlled by God; the egocentric, that he is controlled by the devil". [1]

How this dualism becomes acute for Luther in Christ's atoning struggle, Aulén had already sketched in "Luther's God-concept". Also this line of thought is followed through by Bring. [2]

Ljunggren had shown, that the dualism, which, as unrest, controls the believer's self, takes on its unprecedentedly serious acuteness for Luther through going back to a secret bondage to objective powers or ordinances outside of man, and that the freeing of man from this dualism and unrest likewise consists in something objective, an objective ordinance, not that of the law, but the order of grace, actualized in Christ's work of atonement. Also this train of thought Bring follows through and shows, that the dualism, which is resolved in the atonement and justification, is to be referred back to "God's and the devil's objective power". [3]

There are thus a series of important lines, which Bring follows through in the work mentioned. The trend of his investigation is the following. Since Luther's views contain as a

1. p. 23.
2. ibid.
3. ibid.

background partly massively demonological conceptions, partly feelings of anguish, the first question to answer becomes: Are the dualistic pictures the result of superstition [1], and a despair-psychosis? [2] This question is treated in the first chapter.

The second most comprehensive chapter treats of the meaning of the dualistic motive for Luther's concept of the atonement. [3] First he gives a dogm-historical survey of the dualistic concept of the atonement from the time of the ancient Church to that of Luther. Then he shows through a carefully chosen set of genuine Luther expressions, that the dualistic pictures do not represent incidental conceptions, but Luther's central view of Christ's atoning work. Since it is especially characteristic of Luther's view of the atonement, that, to the destructive forces which Christ overcomes, he reckons not only sin, death, and the devil, but also the law, and wrath, Bring takes especial occasion to investigate the meaning of the law.

Like Holl, Bring finds that the point of departure for Luther's reformatory insight was a new, intensively strong conception of the essence of the law. But just through this, legalism istelf is abrogated. Because when the law is conceived in its deepest meaning, there appears to inhere a contradiction within it. When the law requires that man should act willingly and spontaneously, it requires

1. p. 33 ff.
2. p. 53 ff.
3. p. 67 ff.

exactly that which lies outside the concept of law and demand. The demand of the law thus shows itself to be impossible in and through being set forth. The commandment of the law to not act in an egocentric manner does not free man from egocentricity, but only increases it. For this reason the way of the law, legalism, for Luther is the way of condemnation. [1]

With this Bring arrives at the question regarding the real import of certain concepts, which Luther takes up from the medieval theology, especially, satisfaction, the merits of Christ, and sacrifice. Since these are inserted in an entirely different context, than in the theology mentioned, they take on an entirely different content than there. Holl had pointed out that the Anselmic disjunction, "either punishment or satisfaction", had been broken through in Luther's theology. Bring arrives at the same conclusion. [2] It is especially significant that Bring in this connection utilizes the results of the German Luther research in the line of philology and textual criticism. He differentiates between original and secondary Luther texts, and shows how in the latter often an "Anselmian" view has been smuggled in, which stands in opposition to Luther's own.

The question about God's law and wrath should be dealt with not only from the point of view of the atonement concept, but also from the more general aspect of the God-

1. p. 166 f.
2. p. 214 ff.

concept. This happens in the third chapter on "dualism and the God-concept".[1] Here Bring treats Luther's views about God's omnipotent workings and his relation to evil, as well as double predestination. In this connection he also investigates the structure of Luther's doctrine of justification and the antithesis, "flesh and spirit".

As regards the first concept, about God's omnipotent workings, Bring opposes Runestam and Bohlin, but follows Ljunggren. He holds that "the alternation between God's omnipotence and his opposition to evil, so aptly and sharply delineated by Runestam, so little implies a transition from an irreligious to a religious mode of view, that it rather instead implies a tension within the central religious fundamental concept which is typical for Luther".[2] Bring thus solves this complicated question, in conformity with Aulén's view of Luther's God-concept, as a tension-filled unity.

In general it can be said regarding the later parts of Bring's work, that, with the help of the dualistic perspective, it gives an extraordinarily penetrating clarification as regards several trains of thought in De servo arbitrio, which are hard to get at. The abiding result of Bring's investigation could be formulated thus, that in general it is impossible to understand Luther's views apart from the dualistic fundamental view.

All essential problems, which Bring has

1. p. 254 ff.
2. p. 268.

taken up in his subsequent Luther research, he has in some way touched upon in his first treatise, "Dualism in Luther". In the article, "Coram deo—coram hominibus", [1] he has presented some marginal remarks on Ljunggren's, "Sin and Guilt in Luther's Theology". In general he remarks here against Ljunggren's method, that he has not sufficiently observed philological carefulnéss, but in rather a large way has used secondary sources. [2] But above all he proceeds to an investigation of the important aspects, presented by Ljunggren, regarding "coram deo" and "coram hominibus", together with the antitheses, closely associated with these, flesh-spirit, "homo theologicus"—"homo politicus".

While with Ljunggren the coram-deo-aspect essentially came to represent man's religious situation as over against the "coram-hominibus-aspect, as concerning the ethical life, one must, according to Bring "differentiate between the ethical side of religion, or the expression in act, which faith assumes, according to Luther, and morality in the sense of life regulated by law.... extra locum iustificationis". [3] Now, according to Bring, it is thus, that these two have been made similar or identical by Ljunggren and have been regarded under the "coram-hominibus" aspect. And in this confusion is to be found the ground for Ljunggren's critique of Holl's interpretation of Luther's view of justification.

1. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1930, p. 171 ff.
2. cf. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1931, p. 49.
3. p. 179.

Contrary to Ljunggren, Bohlin, and others, Bring favors Holl's interpretation on this debated point: "As far as we know, this is just the great thing in Holl's presentation of Luther's theology, that he has succeeded in showing, how the whole Christian life can be derived from faith—or out of God's workings in man. That God declares righteous, and that he makes righteous, becomes for Luther not two, but one and the same act. All of man's activity derives from faith, and thus belongs to the righteousness, coram deo, which God gives". [1]

Bring ties up with Runestam's treatment of the questions regarding "flesh and spirit", "inner and outer man", in Luther, in a systematic-theological study, which he has presented in the festal essay, "The Word, the Conscience, and the Inner Man". [2] In a review of W. von Loewenich: Luther's Theologia crucis (1929), [3] Bring had occasion to treat of the interpretation of conscience in Luther "as an undestroyed faculty of the soul, a point of departure for the activity of the free will". [4]

Certainly, according to Bring, such an interpretation is untenable, but he submits at the same time, that it has become a dogma within the Luther research, that the synteresis (conscience) doctrine is a scholastic heritage unusable as far as Luther is concerned. [5]

In the festal essay just mentioned, Bring

1. p. 180.
2. Word and Faith—to Einar Billing on his sixtieth birthday, 1931, p. 36 ff.
3. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1931, p. 44 ff.
4. p. 46.
5. p. 45.

finds occasion to develope his meaning, that the synteresis doctrine in Luther implies, that man finds himself in the position, which can be expressed by the concept, perversion of nature, wherefore synteresis shows itself as an evil conscience over sin, and thus means—certainly not capability of the good—but determination for it. The inner man, conscience, synteresis, are to be understood only in relation to the Word. They are to be inserted under the coram deo aspect, not coram hominibus. Thereby is avoided every psychologistic aberration, as if it were a question of some natural ability in man.

With this Bring has reached the essentially fundamental view, for the determining of iustitia actualis, actual righteousness, and iustitia civilis, civil righteousness, in Luther in, "The Relation Between Faith and Works in Lutheran Theology".[1] Here Bring again takes a stand as to Holl's interpretation of Luther's doctrine of justification, and maintains, in line with what he has previously done: "If one uses the antithesis between Rechtfertigung and Gerechtmachung, justification and making righteous, in a study of Luther, the result must surely be, that both expressions belong together. They relate to one another, Holl maintains, as means to end".[2]

Yet Bring explains more closely at this point in what respect he adheres to Holl. While the latter has wished to show, that both

1. Acta Academiae Aboensis, Humaniora IX, 1933
2. p. 37.

in Luther are combined into one unit, and the difficulty has lain in *how* they can be united, Bring shows, that it is fundamentally not a question of a synthesis of two magnitudes, since, like God's justice and grace, they are not separate things, but one and the same thing.[1] Therefore justification really implies a iustitia actualis. But in this not man, but God, is the subject: "Just because man only in faith does the good, his good deeds are conceived only as an expression of God's love. He becomes a point of emergence for God's love, an organ for the same. He receives all from God, and his doings are a direct expression of God's dealings with him".[2]

But iustitia civilis must be clearly differentiated from this iustitia actualis. While the latter has reference to the "inner man", the man of faith, who is created by the Word, the former has reference to—not man's relation to God—but his position in the outer fellowship, in the community and in the family, etc., that is, in his ethical relationship, aside fom his God-relationship. While the latter is a iustitia coram deo, a righteousness before God, the former is a iustitia coram hominibus, a righteousness before man.[3] By analyzing the meaning of iustitia civilis, Bring explains the principles governing Luther's view of life in the community and the natural ordinances in relation to that which for him is always the central thing, the God-relationship.

1 ibid.
2. p. 46.
3. pp. 169-176.

This iustitia civilis has, according to Luther, its own principle: ratio, reason.[1] But one does not assume that ratio comprises a *religious* principle and contains an independent religious-ethical ideal.[2] If ratio presumed to present such a principle it would enter into competition and conflict with faith. But since ratio as a principle of iustitia civilis has not been understood by Luther in the manner mentioned, life in the community and "the ordinances," according to Luther, come to possess independence in relation to the God-relationship, and can be received into this and can be approved by the love which inheres in faith.[3] Here Luther opens the way for the Christian to the responsibilities in the community. But community life does not have value in itself, but only becomes "a servant of the love which resides in faith."[4] Concretely expressed this implies, that the community life has justification only in so far as it serves the Gospel.

Just as Luther can allow to ratio, as a neutral concept in a religious sense, significance for the sphere determined by iustitia civilis, so he can also here accept liberum arbitrium.[5] Exactly the same holds true of this as of ratio: only if liberum arbitrium lays claim to representing a religious-ethical principle and to signify a way to God and his righteousness,

1. p. 190.
2. p. 188.
3. p. 189.
4. p. 192.
5. p. 189.

does it come into conflict with faith. The problem "servum arbitrium"—"liberum arbitrium", the bound will—the free will, which Bring has penetratingly considered already in his doctor's dissertation, he takes up for renewed consideration, taking account of the conflict between Luther and Erasmus, in a couple of festal articles, "Some viewpoints as to the problem regarding grace and the free will", [1] and, "About the conflict between Erasmus and Luther". [2]

In the former he defines two differing ways in which to conceive of grace and will. According to the one way grace is placed as "the righteousness from God", over against man's "own righteousness," whereby it becomes a question of "two fundamentally differing conceptions as regards the meaning of salvation". According to the other way, grace is conceived as "a power", which wholly or partly must come to the help of man, whereby the train of thought is "psychologically orientated". [3]

Erasmus moved consistently, on the whole, in the latter thought category. Luther, who essentially represents the former, is however not consistent, but has at times been led to speak in a psychologizing manner. When Luther denies liberum arbitrium, the motive is vindication of "the righteousness from God", in contrast with any of man's "own righteousness". But when at times he speaks of liberum

1. From Various Times, Studies dedicated to Hjalmar Holmquist, 28-4-1938, p. 104 ff.
2. To Gustaf Aulèn, 15-5-1939, p. 69 ff.
3. p. 107.

arbitrium as a positive reality, which as to its quality is evil, he has borrowed his mode of expression from the psychologizing train of thought. [1]

In the second festal article Bring shows how the conflict between Erasmus and Luther implies a decision—not between scholasticism and Luther, because Erasmus had in principle burst the bonds of scholastic theology, but between, on the one hand, a humanistic culture religion, which forms the transition phase between medieval religiosity and that of the period of enlightenment, and, on the other hand, the renewing of the Gospel by the Reformation. [2]

Although the author of this review of the recent decades of Swedish Luther research also has devoted himself to the direct study of Luther, it manifestly does not behoove him at this point to give a penetrating analysis of the works, which have emerged from this study. Here we may merely present a brief notice regarding the task, which these works have posed for themselves, and the place, in the Swedish Luther research, where these works are to be fitted in.

Differing facets of Luther's views have been made the object of investigation in two treatises: "The Catholic and Evangelical Christian View—a Typological Study", [3] and "The Atonement—a Dogm-historical and,

1. p. 106, 111 f.
2. p. 82 f.
3. Annual of Uppsala University, 1933, Theology, 4.

Systematic Investigation".[1] In the foreword of the latter treatise it is maintained: "Year by year it has seemed to me more and more important that the one who engages in systematic-theological effort, should purposefully move towards the central thing in the Christian view of faith and life".[2] This foundational principle has been followed out in this way, that the first treatise essentially aims at Luther's doctrine of justification, and the latter at his concept of the atonement. But in both instances, Luther's views are placed in a wider context.

The first named treatise seeks to determine typologically Luther's concept of righteousness as an expression of an evangelical Christian view, in contrast with the Roman Catholic. When Evangelical and Catholic faith views are thus placed in juxtapposition, the task does not consist in contrasting the two views as to their entire actual content, since the accomplishment of such a task is practically impossible, but the object is to present the differing "Christian *outlook*, the Catholic and Evangelical mode of observation, thought, and spiritual reaction".[3]

The background against which Luther's doctrine of the atonement is made clear, is Anselm's doctrine of satisfaction as a type of the Roman Catholic concept of salvation. Within Protestant theology Anselm's theory of the atonement has played a very peculiar role, in that at times thoughts have been presented

1. Annual of Uppsala University, 1935, 8.
2. p. III.
3. ibid.

as Anselmian, which have had nothing to do with Anselm himself. Long enough has Luther's concept of the atonement been placed in the same line with the Anselmic satisfaction theory.

Bring had presented the difference between Luther's and Anselm's concept of the atonement in his treatise, "Dualism in Luther",[1] but his treatment of Anselm could not be more than of a sketchy and summary nature. In "Luther's Faith-concept",[2] von Engeström had taken note of the relation between Luther and Anselm, but his presentation furnished scant clarity on this point.

Aulén had treated Anselm in a comprehensive historical perspective in "The Christian Concept of the Atonement" (Christus Victor),[3] but he had not intended to furnish more than a "sketchy outline," according to what he himself maintained. The task of giving as well-rounded a clarification as possible of Anselm's satisfaction theory, out from his own fundamental theological presuppositions, was thus presented, so to speak, by the actual research situation.

The investigation of Luther's concept of the atonement in the treatise mentioned, "The Atonement—a Dogm-historical and Systematic Investigation",[4] has posed as its task to thoroughly compare Luther with Anselm for the purpose of bringing out, in the sharpest

1. cf. p. 213 ff.
2. cf. p. 78 ff.
3. p. 145 ff.
4. p. 157 ff.

possible relief, the evangelical uniqueness of Luther's conception of the atonement in contrast with the typically Roman Catholic conception of Anselm. The two typological investigations of justification and atonement in Luther, thus lie in line with one another, and comprise differing factors in one and the same theological working program.

It need hardly be added, that the method required for the designated task is not the psychologizing one. The typological method indeed seeks in an eminent degree to view its object as a unique organic whole, separate from every other.

Added to these Luther investigations comes the publication of "The Schmalcaldic Articles—Translation with an Introduction" (1938). This Swedish edition of Luther's theological testament, so called, belongs to the same series of Luther's works, published by the "Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag", in which are included the works by Luther already mentioned, "Regarding the Bound Will—translated by G. Rudberg" (1925), and "Regarding the Freedom of the Christian Man—translation by J. Svennung" (1929), also "Regarding the Babylonian Captivity of the Church—translation with an Introduction, by Y. Brilioth" (1928), "The Large Catechism—translation with an Introduction, by G. Ljunggren" (1931) and "The Large Commentary on Galatians—new Swedish Interpretation with an Introduction, by M. Lindstrom" (1939).

As an exponent of the trend in Swedish

Luther research, which attempts a psychological interpretation of Luther, Harald Eklund's treatment of Luther's views, in "Evangelisches and Katolisches in Max Schelers Ethik", [1] has its interest. This treatise, to be sure, does not in the first place constitute a Luther investigation, but since Scheler, although a Catholic theologian, has received certain impulses from Luther, Eklund is constrained to treat of Luther's views on many important points. And since Scheler's strength as a thinker, especially lies in the psychological sphere, the elements he has taken up in his views from Luther tend naturally to be apprehended in a psychologizing manner.

The psychologizing method is also conditioned by the main purpose of the investigation, the clarification of the evangelical and Catholic elements in Scheler. Because, if these elements, which represent differing Christian types, are actually incompatible, but in Scheler have entered a unity, this unity can be of none but a psychological nature. We must elucidate Eklund's Luther investigation by means of a couple of examples.

In the analysis of the problem, "Evangelical and Catholic Ethics", Eklund proceeds from the antithesis, "fides caritate formata"—"sola fides". However, he does not stop there, but seeks out what is characteristic in the conception regarding man in Luther and in the Catholic view. As far as Luther is concerned he finds this in the thought, that man stands

1. Annual of Uppsala University, 1932, Theology 1.

forth as totus homo, "complete man," only in the position coram deo, [1] while the thought of the supernatural, infused grace, is the most characteristic aspect of the Catholic conception.

While the principle of unity in man, according to Luther, is something transcendent, something outside of man, within Catholicism it is a question of an immanent principle of unity. Now, Eklund manages to have Scheler coincide with Luther in this way, that he understands the coram-deo-aspect, belonging to the totus-homo-view, not as an expression of the religious aspect of theocentricity, but as an expression of a transcending, bound-surpassing, tendency in man, in a psychological-metaphysical sense. Man, according to Scheler, is "a 'between', a 'border', a 'transition', a 'God-manifestation' in the stream of life, and an eternal 'beyond' of life past itself". [2]

According to Eklund, Scheler has appropriated Luther's thought, that one must be saved in order to do the good. [3] But while the usual interpretation of Luther here is that salvation means the fellowship with God gained through justification, and that this is a necessary pre-requisite for good works, Eklund, on the other hand, makes Scheler agree with Luther in this way, that he understands salvation in a psychological sense, as a feeling of bliss, which one cannot take for oneself, but must be given, and thus is an expression of grace.

However, the use of such a psychologizing

1. pp. 14-23 ff.
2. p. 45.
3. p. 119.

method is to be viewed more as an episode within the latest phase of Swedish Luther research. The youngest generation of researchers are quite commonly attracted by the task of clarifying Luther's views as an organic whole no matter where the point of departure is taken.

At an earlier stage in this research, various parts of Luther's ethics had been made the object of investigation. Billing had taken up Luther's conception of the state for consideration; Runestam had taken up his concept of freedom, etc. Herbert Olsson has proceeded to investigate Luther's ethical view as a whole in his treatise, "The Fundamental Problem in Luther's Social Ethics I" (1934). Because, "Luther's ethics is as such social ethics," according to Olsson. [1] He sets forth how Lutheranism, in the matter of social ethics, seems to be worse off than the other two main confessions, Catholicism and Calvinism.

First, in a theoretical sense: Lutheranism has no direct counterpart of the Catholic doctrine of natural law, nor to the modern Calvinistic doctrine regarding the rights of man; but also with regard to the practical application of the social ideas, Lutheranism takes a back seat. Out of this situation there arises the question, as to whether "It is generally possible to gain a unique, essential, view of social life, proceeding from the current viewpoints of Lutheranism". [2]

1. p. 8.
2. pp. 6-7.

From Lutheranism the road leads directly to Luther himself. The deciding question then becomes this: "If in general it is a distinguishing characteristic of Christianity, that its God-view includes a demand for a certain relationship man to man, then one must assume, that also Luther's religious views sustain a definite conception regarding human relationships. The question as to whether Luther's characteristic God-view involves an altogether specific conception regarding the social life therefore demands investigation".[1] This is the object of Olsson's investigation.

However, only the first principal section of this task has been dealt with. Olsson has investigated certain concepts, fundamental for social ethics: lex naturae, natural law,[2] freedom-constraint,[3] trust-fear,[4] and Person-Amt, person-vocation.[5] The treatment of the realization of social ethics in the Church, in the natural orders, state, family, etc., has been reserved for a second, still unpublished, section of the treatise. The final result of the investigation is therefore not yet available. Yet the treatise, in its available form, points back to the problems, which were dealt with by Billing and others at the beginning of the century. But these problems are attacked with the help of the results, reached by the intervening Swedish Luther research.

1. p. 7 f.
2. p. 13 ff.
3. p. 114 ff.
4. p. 157 ff.
5. p. 202 ff.

In the center of Luther's views, whether viewed from a predominantly ethical or dogmatic viewpoint, stands the faith-concept. Since this continually attracts new investigation it is a sign that what has been said on this question is not the last word in the matter, as well as that Luther's faith-concept affords well nigh inexhaustible depths. Ruben Josefson's treatise, "Humility and Faith—a Study in the Theology of Young Luther" (1939), comprises essentially an investigation of Luther's faith-concept. The Lectures on Romans, 1515-1516, constitute Josefson's main source.

The investigation concerns mainly the concept of humility. In contrast with Ficker, Kurz, and others, Josefson maintains that Luther, in the old humilitas-concept, an expression of the medieval monastic ideal, has injected a new content. The result of the investigation is, that humilitas, humility, essentially coincides with faith in the evangelical sense. This is made clear in several respects: from the viewpoint of Luther's view of sin, justification, significance of Christ, regeneration, the activity of the new life, and sanctification.

Josefson's analysis of Luther's doctrine of justification is of especial interest. He favors Holl's view, that Luther already in the lectures on Romans had essentially reached his reformatory view of justification. How this at one and the same time implies "Rechtfertigung" and "Gerechtmachung," Josefson, however, explains in a different way than Holl and Bring, who follows Holl. It is characteristic of the lectures

on Romans, according to Josefson, that a clear distinction is made between original sin and unrighteousness, between sin as concupiscentia and iniustitia, concupiscence and unrighteousness. [1]

But besides this one must note what for Luther is the highest form of sin, namely false belief. This has a connection with both concupiscence and unrighteousness. It has, on the one hand, its root in the evil desire, concupiscence, because it implies exactly that man's egocentric will is set to seek its own in God. [2] On the other hand it is conditioned by God's imputation of guilt and liability to punishment in the case of unrighteousness, and thus allows the objective side of sin to emerge. [3] The whole weight falls on this objective characteristic of sin.

Since it is thus, in the first hand, a question of an objective tying up with sin, constituted by God's imputation of unrighteousness, man cannot be set free from the power of sin and evil desire, until this objective constraint is lifted by an imputation of another kind.

The primary thing in man's justification must therefore be, that God does not impute unrighteousness, but righteousness instead. Since sin in its highest form, false belief, has connection with evil desire, concupiscence, the non-imputation of sin realized in the imputation of righteousness, comes at the

1. p. 22.
2. p. 41.
3. ibid.

same time to imply an abrogation of the power of sin and evil desire. Therefore justification primarily implies declaring to be just but along with this a real making righteous, or real renewal of life as imbedded in this declaring to be just. [1]

"In his treatise, Luther's Doctrine of the State, Einar Billing states the following, after treating the doctrine of the three estates: 'There is but *one* point more expressive of the relationship between Luther and the medieval social picture, namely his teaching regarding "the two governments"'. With these words Billing clearly indicated the central position, which the doctrine of a spiritual and a temporal government occupies in Luther's theology."

With these words Gustaf Törnvall begins his treatise, "The Spiritual and Temporal Government with Luther—Studies in Luther's World and Social Concept" (1940). Thus the latest treatise within Swedish Luther research links directly up with the first for the period here considered, 1900—1940. It shows Billing's continued great significance for Swedish systematic-theological researches. However, Törnvall's treatise would not have seen the light of day had he not had the opportunity to utilize the subsequent findings of Luther research.

How this research has been brought a step forward through Törnvall's investigation, can perhaps best be elucidated by a comparison

1. p. 42.

with Bring's already indicated treatment of iustitia actualis and iustitia civilis according to Luther. Ljunggren had indicated the important aspects coram deo and coram hominibus, but he had, as Bring submits, allowed the coram-deo-aspect to represent man's specifically religious position, in contrast with the coram-hominibus-aspect as representing his ethical situation.

Against this Bring had maintained, that the coram-deo-aspect also comprises "the ethical side of religion", that is, "the expression in action, which faith assumes, according to the opinion of Luther, while the coram-hominibus-aspect has reference to "morality in the sense of life regulated by law—extra locum iustificationis". While the coram-deo-aspect thus signifies the sphere which is determined by iustitia christiana, specifically, iustitia actualis, and where the ethical is the expression in action taken by faith, in which God alone is the ethical principle and subject; the coram-hominibus-aspect, on the other hand, signifies the sphere which is determined by iustitia civilis, in which both ratio and liberum arbitrium are to be considered as the principle of the moral life.

Now, according to Bring, assuredly these two spheres are independent in relation to one another, wherefore the one, which connotes the civil life, can be received into the other, without altering its religious-ethical character in any way. But Bring has not explained how this reception can take place according

to Luther. Several questions present themselves: Does not Ljunggren's dividing of Luther's view into two spheres, in a certain sense remain? Does not Bring attempt to clarify Luther's views by assuming a "double morality" in Luther, a double ethical, specifically, moral: *one*, where God is principle and subject, and *another*, which in ratio, liberum arbitrium, and the law, finds its principle?

Here Törnvall's investigation takes hold and brings the clarification of Luther's views a step forward. This takes place in the fourth chapter of the treatise in the treating of "iustitia christiana and iustitia civilis". Like Bring, Törnvall maintains that Luther supports a clear boundary between the two kinds of righteousness. But, one has not sufficiently noted the fact, that iustitia civilis is placed alongside of iustitia christiana as a *real righteousness*". Now Törnvall shows how goodness not only in iustitia christiana, but also in iustitia civilis, comes from God, according to Luther. Therefore also in iustitia civilis it is a matter of a real righteousness. [1]

But if, as Bring rightly maintains in the civil life ratio and liberum arbitrium have their place, can not the real goodness of the civil righteousness in a certain sense come to be reckoned to man as merit and the door thus be opened for the Romish doctrine of merit? This result Luther avoids, according to Törnvall, by the distinction between "Person" and "Amt". Iustitia civilis does not represent

1. pp. 160-176.

man's personal goodness, but the innate goodness of the calling, which evidently can not be reckoned to the performer. [1]

God's command is the ground for the act, in connection with the calling, being good. This goodness man can not claim for himself as merit. In this way iustitia civilis is absolutely separated from iustitia christiana, so that no interplay is possible between them. The relation between iustitia christiana and iustitia civilis has its counterpart in the relation between the Creator and creation, that is, the spiritual and temporal governments. [2]

The "fundamental principle" of the Lutheran doctrine of government, which is treated in the third chapter, [3] Törnvall finds in the distinct separation of the spiritual and secular governments. The importance of keeping the boundary sharp and clear at this point, Törnvall has earlier presented in the article, "The Gospel and the Secular Order in Luther". [4] This separation has its counterpart in the difference between the Creator and creation. But, since the Creator stands back of creation, the two governments do not signify two separate spheres. It is within the one and same sphere, that God performs his government, partly spiritual, partly secular.

For this reason the secular orders and the communal life can be taken up into the God-relationship. This taking up is made possible

1. ibid.
2. pp. 180-103 ff.
3. p. 68 ff.
4. Swedish Theological Quarterly, 1937, p. 61 ff.

through this, that the God of salvation also is the God of creation. The unity and tension between the two governments correspond to be unity and tension in the Christian faith in God as creator and savior. Thus Luther's world and social view is brought back to the point, which, throughout the whole history of dogma, has shown itself to be the cardinal point in the Christian faith in God: The God of salvation and the God of creation are identical.

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It has been stated earlier, that Einar Billing's, "Luther's Doctrine of the State", to which Törnvall expressly adheres, came out as an uncompleted first part, and essentially comprises a broadly planned introduction to the presentation of Luther's doctrine of the state. Törnvall's treatise is therefore in a certain sense to be conceived as a continuation of Billing's, and comprises a very important addition to the Swedish Luther research. It has been translated into German a couple of years ago under the title, "Geistliches und weltliches Regiment bei Luther, Studien zur Luthers Weltbild und Gesellschaftsverständnis" (1947), and thereby made available to readers in Luther's own homeland.

In Sweden we have for long been accustomed to speak about the calling in an evangelical-Lutheran sense, with a point of

departure from Billing's treatise, "Our Calling" (1909), where the calling has been set forth as the synthesis of faith in providence and faith in forgiveness, and thus seen clearly to stand under the sign of the Gospel. However, we have not always made it clear to ourselves, that this determination of the calling by Billing was not essentially intended to convey Luther's view of the same. In his treatise, "Luther's Doctrine of the State" (1900), Billing had given an intimation regarding Luther's own concept of the *calling*, which is considerably more narrow than that of Billing's, presented above, and more determined by the concept of the law. Billing here shows how the calling, according to Luther, essentially implies exercise for faith and mortification of the flesh.

Since Gustaf Wingren, in his doctor's thesis, "Luther's Doctrine of the Calling"(1942), allows the calling with Luther to be in a more marked manner associated with the law, he brings us thus back to Luther's own view of the calling. By avoidance of genetic, developmental-historical and psychological questions, Wingren proceeds to unravel the question as to what the calling is accoring to Luther, and seeks to interpret Luther's untterances regarding the calling out from his fundamental theological view.

Wingren's investigation of Luther's doctrine of the calling proceeds in three main stages. The first chapter, which bears the title, "Earth and Heaven", [1] places the kingdom of the

1. p. 9 ff.

law over the body on earth, which is a corruptible kingdom, as over against the eternal kingdom of the gospel over the conscience in heaven. Since both secular and spiritual governments are in God's hand, the difference between the two does not signify in itself any hostile relationship. But actually with Luther it is thus that the thought of the two governments almost always goes over into the thought of the contradiction and hostility existing between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the devil.

God and devil do not stand side by side as neutral magnitudes, but they are enemies of one another. The constant struggle between them cuts straight through the two governments, the secular and the spiritual, the kingdom of the law over the body on earth, and the kingdom of the gospel over the conscience in heaven. The circumstances in this connection are more fully elaborated by Wingren in the second chapter, entitled, "God and devil". [1]

Up till now Wingren has tried, as far as possible, to keep the individualistic viewpoint back and merely has taken note of the powers or orders, kingdoms or governments. But it is clear that the whole study becomes entirely too abstract and out of touch with reality, if man is not included for consideration.

The third chapter, with the title, "Man", [2] especially takes note of how man in his calling stands in the earthly kingdom, but in hope looks for the heavenly. He is thus placed between earth and heaven. But he also stands between

1. p. 89 ff.
2. p. 173 ff.

God and the devil, and his life in the calling is one of the fields of battle for the struggle between God and the devil.

Luther's concept of the calling embraces a wealth of questions and viewpoints, and Wingren simply declines to try to gather them all together under one single comprehensive aspect. Just this that the material is allowed to speak, in its concrete and variegating richness, makes Wingren's presentation reassuring and convincing. One has the impression that the author has penetrated deeply into Luther's views, both in the matter of his general theological fundamental view, as well as his doctrine of the calling. At the same time the presentation is characterized by a concrete tangibility and realism, which makes it possible for nearly every one to appropriate and to understand, intrinsically very abstruse trains of thought in Luther.

If it is a question here of mentioning any certain point, one could indicate the treatment of the relation between faith and love with Luther, which has by no means been presented satisfactorily in the more recent Luther research, in that faith has preferably been treated by itself alone and thus has been severed from love. Wingren sets forth the concrete unity of faith and love with Luther: "When faith operates through love, it comes down and is incarnated, as God became man in Christ". "That faith is bound up with love is quite the same miracle as that God became man". [1]

1. p. 50, 51.

In the calling, which, according to Luther, is in the most intimate way connected with the law, God reaches all men, who to be sure are placed in different callings, and he has his will accomplished, whether men serve willingly or unwillingly in their vocations. In other words: God reaches all men with his arm through the law. Here it becomes plain that the question of the calling with Luther has a certain relation to the question with him regarding natural theology.

Ruben Josefson in his treatise, "The Problem of Natural Theology in Luther", [1] has directly intimated this connection: "When the manuscript of this investigation was completed, G. Wingren's dissertation, "Luther's Doctrine of the Calling", appeared. I found in it corroboration of my own findings on essential points. Through this dissertation also a few sections in my presentation became superfluous, so that certain elisions could be made". [2] In the treatise mentioned Josefson has taken up for treatment the problem which lies in the fact that Luther, on the one hand, seems to posit a general natural knowledge of God, but on the other hand denies the ability of the natural man to reach a living knowledge of God, and that he derives the real knowledge of God and his will from the Christian revelation.

Since Luther then actually reckons with a "natural theology", admittedly it can not be a question of a natural theology in the spirit of

1. The Annual of the University of Uppsala, 1943: 4.
2. p. 5.

culture. A subjective rational theology does not reside in Luther. He harbors no interest in the so-called metaphysical proofs of the existence of God. The natural theology, oriented in the history of religions, which seeks points of contract for the Christian revelation in the non-Christian religions, and a natural theology, determined by psychology of religion, which works from the conception of religious aptitudes in man as a point of departure, are likewise foreign to Luther.

When Luther reckons with a "natural theology", this concept must further not be interpreted in a scholastic sense. The typically scholastic conception, that lex naturae is a direct expression for lex aeternae, not only is not found in Luther, but stands in direct conflict with his fundamental religious view. The relation between natural and revealed theology, that is between reason and revelation, in Luther, must also not be understood so that revelation would represent a theoretical truth, which, so to speak, complements the natural knowledge of God given through reason. Reason and revelation do not lie in line with one another, so to speak, and have no current connection. Reason, on the one hand, and faith or revelation on the other hand, are two mutually opposed principles.

When Luther reckons that the natural man, in and by his reason, has a certain knowledge of God, this implies, that every person by nature has religion, and that the natural man thus always possesses a god. In other words: God reaches man also in nis natural condition, but

he reaches him through the law. The relationship between the religion of the natural man, and the Christian faith, must therefore, according to Luther, be conceived as an expression for the relationship between law and gospel. The natural man is situated in the sphere of the law. And in so far as this law is the law of God, the natural man also is reached by God.

But this, that man through the law is reached by God's arm, however, does not imply that he by nature stands in relationship with the Christian revelation of God, for this is given in the Gospel. For this reason, according to Luther, the Christian faith does not constitute a religion among a large variety of religions, according to a religio-historical mode of view, but something unique in itself, "sui generis". The Christian faith is a judgment and a victory over all that is termed human religion.

Luther has said that it is a difficult art to divide properly between law and gospel. Under such circumstances, it is not to be wondered at, that the problem of the law and gospel time after time has elicited the attention of research. Thus Ragnar Bring, has published a study, "The Law and the Gospel and the third use of the law in Lutheran Theology". [1]

Certainly Bring, speaking of Lutheran theology in the treatise mentioned, has in the

1. pp. 43-97, in the collected works, "Zur Theologi Luthers. Aus der Arbeit der Luther—Agricola Gesellschaft in Finnland I" (1943), included in the series of works, "Schriften der Luther-Agricola Gesellschaft in Finnland 4".

first place reference to the Formula of Concord, the sixth article of which treats the question regarding the third use of the law, but for Bring it becomes in the last analysis Luther who has the last decisive word. In an introductory way the author maintains with reference to the article in the Formula of Concord mentioned: "In my opinion this article is an extraordinarily clearly written, factually superior and correct exposition, which nevertheless is stamped by certain historical presuppositions. But I mean this in quite a different sense than is usually the case". [1] Therefore it is necessary first to explain what the question regarding the third use of the law implies.

Bring proceeds in his usual, very carefully analyzing and penetrating manner, to first give an essential specification of the import of the question in hand. In short it implies that the law has the task of giving norms and guides for the born-again and converted that is the new man. As regards Luther's view, the problem complicates itself to the extent, that Luther easily can and actually does use the concepts "born-again" and "converted", but uses these concepts in another sense than has become customary in a later mode of speech under pietistic influence. "For us conversion or rebirth often means a concrete spiritual change in a certain person, a change of nature, which perhaps has taken place after a period of deep contrition, a change of nature which causes his life to be, so to speak, divided into two sections,

1. p. 48.

into the time before, and the time after this conversion" [1]

While we, under the influence of pietistic thought patterns, think of conversion as a psychological process, it is for Luther not something psychological, though nevertheless something fully concrete: "Through the Holy Spirit Christ himself comes to man.....He is in faith, faith carries (trägt) Christ in itself". This characterizes the new man. But the existence of the new man does not imply, "that the old man has disappeared". On the contrary man is and remains until death "flesh" and "old man". [2]

This again connects with the question regarding law and gospel: "Christ must possess the conscience free from the law; there Christ must reign. But in the external, the law must reign". According to Luther the concrete man is at one and the same time old and new man and at one and the same time placed under the law and Gospel. [3] This view by Luther as to man's position makes it impossible for him to make room for the third use of the law, or the task of the law to give norms and guides for the born-again and converted, that is, the new man.

The matter, however, shapes up differently, according to Bring, when the psychological mode of thought becomes predominant under the influence of Melanchthon, and the new,

1. p. 50.
2. p. 51, 52.
3. p. 53, 70.

that is, born-again, man is thought to represent a new habitual condition. Here the talk concerning the third use of the law can assume a certain meeting. As concerns the sixth article of the Formula of Concord, assuredly there are three reasons given why the law has been given to us, and that thereby the third use of the law seems to be posited. "Nevertheless one notes already in the very rendering of the question a certain difference as compared with Melanchthon", asserts Bring, and motivates this more closely thus: "The reason for speaking of norms for the life of the reborn lies in the fact that a great deal of the fleshly nature still remains in him. This is factually the meaning of the statement, that the law is necessary for the *old* man. But here is not spoken of such norms as could be interpreted as life norms for the *new* man. [1]

From this Bring finally draws the conclusion: "When it is said that the law is given the reborn because of their fleshly nature, and therefore must be preached to them, that is purely Lutheran". [2] In this way Bring rediscovers genuine Lutheran notes in the sixth article of the Formula of Concord.

While Luther's view of the sacraments has been the object of more or less sporadic attention earlier in Swedish theology—thus G. Ljunggren has in a couple of festal essays treated, "Luther's Doctrine of the Lord's

1. p. 83 f.

2. p. 84.

Supper", [1] and, "Luther and Infant Baptism".[2]— Ruben Josefson, on the other hand, has taken up Luther's concept of baptism for a more penetrating investigation in the treatise, "Luther's Teaching regarding Baptism" (1944). Josefson proceeds from Luther's general over all characterization of a sacrament as "an outward sign instituted by God, connected with a word of promise". [3]

During an earlier phase, while Luther especially stood in conflict as over against the Romish sacramental teachings, it was of importance for him to point to the Word, the word of promise, which follows the sign and gives it content, as over against the one-sided emphasis on the sign (Sacramentum). Later, when Luther just as determinedly had to reject a spiritualistic thinning out and vaporizing of the sacrament on the part of certain ecstatic movements, he places the greatest emphasis on the sign, which in baptism comprises water. The former position is taken by Luther in De captivitate, 1520, and the latter in the Cathechisms, 1529.

Here we must note, that the Word, which is connected with the sign (water) in baptism, and makes of this a sacrament, is a *word* of promise. This indicates, that baptism, according to Luther, points forward to the fulfilment of the promise, and thus at bottom stands under the stamp of eschatology. At the same time

1. The Word and Faith. To Einar Billing on his sixtieth Birthday, October 6, 1931, pp. 193-216,
2. To Gustaf Aulèn, 15-5-1939, pp. 219-234.
3. p. 9.

Baptism is for Luther the sacrament of justification and regeneration, as surely as justification and regeneration belong indissolubly together in his conception. "Man is truly pure and innocent in baptism. But he is this 'sakramentlich', in a sacramental manner, The eschatological righteousness is sacramentally present in baptism". [1] With this Josefson has touched upon a very important matter, which concerns the evangelical Lutheran concept of the sacrament at large. While this, like the concept regarding the sacrament of primitive Christianity, stands under the sign of eschatology, the Roman Catholic concept shares with the reformed, although in differing respects, uneschatological characteristics.

Josefson has also taken up for treatment the question of Infant Baptism according to Luther. "Luther presupposes faith in the child, to be baptized. He has not denied this faith. But he repudiates the thought that this could be made the object of knowledge, and that the Church should baptize the children on the condition of a demonstrable faith. However, we bring the child forward to baptism in the conviction that it believes. We believe that the child believes because Christ himself is present in baptism. [2] Christ cannot approach man as Savior otherwise than by way of faith. The child's faith thus is not a possibility of its own, but that of God or Christ. He is incarnated in baptism, and Luther's certainty

1. p. 61.
2. p. 4.

regarding the child's faith, builds on the real presence of Christ in baptism".

Josefson's interpretation of Luther's conception of baptism can in the present instance be summend up in the words just quoted.[1] With this Josefson has concurrently made a contribution to the understanding of the concept of faith itself in Luther. Faith must not be conceived merely as a psychic function in man. It cannot be grasped merely by the help of psychological categories. Theologically it must be understood simply as the presence of Christ. In ipsa fide Christus adest, Christ is present in faith itself.

Rudolf Johannesson has presented a Luther study, inserted in a comprehensive ideo-historical perspective, and placed above all against a Roman Catholic background, in his thesis, "Person and Fellowship according to the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Fundamental View" (1947). Specifically, the point of emphasis for the author does not fall on "person and fellowship", but on the background forming differing concepts as to person and fellowship within the Roman Catholic and Reformatory views. That is, on the one hand, the value perspective, and on the other, the perspective of the Word. According to Johannesson, while the value perspective, represented by Augustine and Thomas, dominates the Roman Catholic view; the perspective of the Word, with Luther, is identical with the original and essential view of Christianity.

1. p. 146.

The tendency in Anders Nygren, in his "The Christian Concept of Love through the Ages. Eros and Agape I, II" (1930-1936), to allow practically all bewteen primitive Christianity and the Reformation, to fall to one side of the essentially Christian, has been accentuated and strengthened in Johannesson. Nygren had, however, through the caritas-synthesis, as a oneness of eros and agape in Augustine, allowed *something* of the agape of primitive Christianity, to persist throughout major sections of medival times, although in strictly modified form.

According to Johannesson, Augustine and Thomas represent a view which falls essentially outside of Christianity, wholly favoring, as they do, the value perspective, which hails from the philossphic thinking of antiquity. While Nygren let eros be a unified attitude opposed to Christianity, and in this connection made no essential distinction between the Platonic and Aristotelian views, Johannesson differentiates sharply between the value perspective of Plato as compared with that of Aristotle.

The value perspective in Plato implies that the highest value is transcendent of the subject, while in Aristotle it is immanent in the subject. This means that man according to Plato surrenders to something lying outside of himself, while aocording to Aristotle he strives to realize something which inheres in his own being. The Platonic subject-transcending value perspective predominates in Augustine, and the Aristotelian value perspective, immanent in the

subject, predominates in Thomas. This appears in various tendencies in their views.

According to Augustine, the subject-transcending attitude, toward the highest value or God, remains in man in spite of sin, and this makes itself felt "in the oscillating movement of desire as a constant unrest" because of sin. According to the subject-immanence view of Thomas, sin becomes a loss or a destruction of certain qualities in man. With Augustine grace comes to imply that the uneasy oscillating of the desire between relative values, is replaced by a fixed attitude toward God as the highest good. But according to Thomas, grace brings about a real transformation of man's nature destroyed by sin.

As contrasted with the value perspective in Roman Catholicism, there exists in Luther the fundamental view of primitive Christianity, the perspective of the Word. This means first and foremost, that God does not constitute a value according to the view of primitive Christianity and the Reformation, not even a summum bonum. He stands above the value perspective as the one who speaks the Word. In this the author sees the deepest implication of the Biblical concept of creation, God as creator stands above creation, and with this also above the values.

The value perspective is limited to what is created. But there it nevertheless has a place, according to Johannesson. It is only necessary to clearly differentiate the two perspectives. The fact that both perspectives are found in

Luther explains the dialectic character of Luther's theology. Because of this the law takes on a double meaning: the civil use of the law touches the acts within the world of the created (the value perspective), and its spiritual use pertains to the God relationship (the perspective of the Word). In the consciousness of evil deeds performed, man still remains under the value perspective. Only as consciousness of sin becomes consciousness of unbelief does man come under the perspective of the Word.

The material which Johannesson has brought into his investigation is extensive and comprehensive, and eminently bears the characteristics of systematic theology. Especially enlightening and clarifying is the analysis of the value perspectives in Plato and Aristotle in their differing manifestations, as well as the offshoots of these in Augustine and Thomas.

Since the eros-motif comes under the value perspective mentioned, and since Anders Nygren in his major treatise, "The Christian Cencept of Love, I, II", conceives of the eros-motif in an altogether too general and undifferentiated way, Johannesson can be said here to have carried the research forward a step beyond Nygren. However, it is in a questioning attitude one stands before the last main section of Johannesson's treatise. Here to be sure he submits that Luther represents something new and different than is found in the nearest foregoing theology of Roman Catholicism. But when the perspective of the Word, is not presented as the fully deciding factor in

Luther, but that alongside of this there is inserted the value persective as valid in the sphere of creation apart from the Creator, one asks, has not hereby the unity in Luther's theology been shattered in a metaphysical sense, and the sustaining values in it been sacrificed?

Further one may ask, does not the antithesis, appearing in earlier Luther interpretations, between iustitia christiana and iustitia civilis, return, although in a modified form, although this antithesis in the very latest phase of Luther research has been dissolved, and it has been shown that Luther's theological views fundamentally are characterized as being clearly integral?

This review of the Swedish Luther research from the beginning of the present century can fittingly be closed by reference to Karl Holl's treatise, "Was verstand Luther unter Religion?" as published in a Swedish translation by Astrid Lindroth under the title, "Luthers Kristendomssyn" (1947), Luther's Concept of Christanity. Likewise Holl's, "Der Neubau der Sittlichkeit", has earlier been translated and published by Anders Nygren under the title, "Luthers etiska åskådning" (1928), Luther's Ethical Views. These two treatises by Holl are the most important, from the point of view of systematic theology, of his Luther investigations.

The first mentioned constiutes normally the foundation for the second, since it has both the greatest essential breadth and depth. It

has also been of the greatest significance for the very latest phase of Swedish Luther research.

This research has certainly presented and clarified a series of important aspects and characteristics in Luther's faith-view, life-view, and his interpretation of Christianity, such as: The "Copernican" Revolution in Luther, representing a shift from the current anthropocentric, eudemonistic, and egocentric attitude, in both a religious and an ethical aspect, to a clear theocentricity. The conception of love in a Christian sense as free, unmotivated, and spontaneous love, agape, as distinguished from, and in contrast with the demanding love, eros. The conception of a new and deepened content in the evangelical God-concept, where God's righteousness, holiness and wrath, on the one hand, and his mercy on the other hand, have come to light in an unabridged way. The new conception of man by Luther, with the consequent total view of him as sinner, and the resulting new and radical seriousness as to the concept of sin. The fundamental importance of assent in Luther's faith concept, which nevertheless does not represent a medieval and scholastic residue in his thinking, but constitutes something entirely new in the history of dogmas. The conception of Luther's ethics as fundamentally constituting social ethics, and a new orientation in him as regards the formation of the Church-concept, the development of the doctrine of the state, the relationship between the spiritual and secular governments, Christi-

anity and humanism, the problem of natural theology, and the fundamental significance of the eschatological motif.

Since all of these important aspects and characteristics of Luther's views, his view of life, and his interpretation of Christianity, are found to be indicated or clearly and pregnantly elaborated in the treatise by Holl just mentioned, "Was verstand Luther unter Religion?", one can say regarding this work, as it has been assiduously studied by Swedish Luther searchers, that it has constituted an important source of inspiration for the Swedish Luther research in one of its later phases. Yet, it must be observed that the Swedish research, at the same time, always has stood critically independent, in relation to Holl, and in relation to contemporary German theology and Luther research as a whole.

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It has been said, that the theology which has emerged in Sweden during the first decade of the twentieth century, can be characterized "as *Swedish* theology in a higher degree than any other theology in this century" (Aulèn). Pehr Eklund had raised the slogan: Northern Theology, in the treatise which already here has been designated as his main theological work. J. A. Eklund and others had energetically reacted against the Germanizing

proces swithin Swedish theology.

The foremost postive factor in the building up of a Swedish Theology is to be found in the Swedish Luther research. The designation "Swedish", however, does not imply any national limitation. The scientific work, when it is taken seriously, knows no national boundaries. But it denotes the independence which belongs to all scientific labor. The Swedish Luther research has brought forth results which maintain their place in an international forum. But it has also, as is probably evident from this review, pointed to new problems, which it leaves to the future to unravel.